

June 1935

The American Magazine of

ART

Including "Creative Art"



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373 IS THE PAGE

"If, after reading the quotations from the Resolution [Page 373], every artist does not do a little 'writing to the editor' he must never complain if we have a department or ministry of fine arts as painful to free-thinking artists as the French ministry"

So writes Forbes Watson. Read what he has to say and write your reactions to the editor.

*The American
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"Creative Art"*

VOLUME XXVIII

JUNE 1935

NUMBER 6

Late Saxon Crucifix, Walrus Ivory
Collection South Kensington Museum, London

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Wu Chen: Bamboo in the Wind

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801 Barr Building, Washington, D. C.

DUNCAN PHILLIPS, FORBES WATSON, and PHILIPPA WHITING, Associate Editors

Members of the staff can frequently be reached through our New York office in the Squibb Building, 745 Fifth Avenue. All mail should be addressed to the Washington Office.

AUTHORS IN THIS ISSUE

STANLEY CASSON is a Fellow of New College, Oxford. On the occasion of his first appearance in the Magazine (December, 1934: "The Mosaics of St. Sophia") we explained that he was mainly a classical archaeologist, that he had done a good deal of work in the field in Greece and Turkey, that he had written for *The Burlington Magazine*, had written two books on modern sculpture, two on Greek sculpture, one of the latter being *The Technique of Early Greek Sculpture* (1933). Recently published is his *Progress of Archaeology*, a book in which he surveys the whole field and its accomplishments during the past few decades.

SUZANNE LA FOLLETTE has been granted a Guggenheim Fellowship to extend her studies of the relationship between art and economics, just the kind of work which makes her article this month so important. She is now in Europe. Her book, *Art in America*, which appeared a few years ago, continues to be one of the best surveys of American art.

WALTER F. ISAACS last appeared in the Magazine in the September, 1933, issue ("Art and the Creative Process"). He is head of the art department at the University of

Washington. He is himself a good progressive painter, his work being known widely and favorably in the Northwest.

PHILIPPA WHITING is an Associate Editor of the Magazine.

This month E. M. BENSON presents another of his articles on the Forms of Art. The series will be continued in the autumn. Mr. Benson is a frequent contributor to the Magazine. He has written also for *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *Creative Art* (before the merger), *Parnassus*, and other periodicals. He is now working on a book.

ERNEST BRACE has written several one-man articles for us: those on Henry Lee McFee, Alexander Brook, and Henry Mattson. He lives near Woodstock, New York, and has had occasion to know well the men of whom he writes both as artists and human beings.

FORBES WATSON is an Associate Editor of the Magazine. Some of our new readers may not know that he was formerly editor of *The Arts*, art critic on the old *New York World*, and the *New York Evening Post*. He was Technical Director of the Public Works of Art Project.



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WU CHEN: BAMBOO IN THE WIND
CHINESE YUAN DYNASTY
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Reproduced in connection with "Forms of Art," Page 356

June 1935

AMERICANS IN PARIS

THOSE of us who resent hixing jingoistic pseudo-patriotism with art have been so busy at home that we have not realized on how wide a front the enemy is attacking. Word comes today from Paris that the same element which stands pat for American art, good or bad, is entrenching itself along the Seine and claiming to be *the* American expeditionary art force. These self-styled representatives are the kind of artists, at one with no living tradition, who can talk better than they paint, and as a consequence have been able to convince busy diplomats of the value of their art and their opinions. Critics and fellow artists, however, grow increasingly skeptical. An injustice is being done, and in a way that only incompetent artists are forced to employ. Those pretenders who find their chief strength in espousing an over-ripe nationalism naturally find it easier to use extra-artistic methods. They are not at home with their art; for them easel, palette, paint, and brush are mere stage properties of a studio melodrama. Their best—or worst—work is done over the tea cups.

The matter has come to a head in reference to the representation of American painting in the Jeu-de-Paume Museum, the annex of the Luxembourg devoted to foreign schools of present-day art. These self-appointed representatives of American art, with the backing of their leagues and societies at home, have established a strong influence which makes the inclusion of our most significant painting nearly impossible. Other American artists in Paris, those who know that excellent work has been done in the United States since 1910, approached the Jeu-de-Paume *conservateurs*. These officials smiled sympathetically and said: "That is the business of your ambassador."

Obviously the expeditionary force has captured the ear and the attention of our Government's official representatives. It follows that these officials must be informed and enlightened before American painting of the first quality can have a showing in Paris. While the real artists worked at home, these others insinuated themselves into official favor. One cannot blame the ambassador and his staff, who naturally feel inclined to take the side with which they are already familiar, and who doubtless do not suspect the existence of intrigue in the world of art.

Particularly timely is this exposure of how our would-be official artists go to work, especially when benefitted by the presence of an art ministry which controls the museums along with the dying academies. We have long feared a similar institution in the United States. Hearings are now being held in Washington to consider the creation of a Federal department to watch over art (as well as science and literature). On pages 372 and 373 of this issue Mr. Forbes Watson reports more fully on this matter than is necessary here. The news of Americans in Paris, however, gives us a warning which we dare not ignore. We can easily imagine how quickly these artist-politicians would come clamoring back again if the machine here were made more favorable to their mode of operation. Heaven help us, we have too many of their kind here already.

F. A. WHITING, JR.



FIGURE 1
LATE SAXON CRUCIFIX, WALRUS IVORY
Collection South Kensington Museum, London

LATE ANGLO-SAXON SCULPTURE

By STANLEY CASSON

THE study of the art of Anglo-Saxon England of the final period of Saxon control has for long been in an anomalous position. It is admitted by all that in the Winchester and allied schools of miniature painting and drawing, whether in the shape of the most elaborate painted pages or in that of the delicate line drawings of the Caedmon Manuscript in the Bodleian, we see an art of the utmost refinement and delicacy, obviously the product of an elaborate and sophisticated culture. Anglo-Saxon gold jewelry has long been famous; the gold and garnet brooches of Kent and the King Alfred jewel illustrate a profound knowledge of the goldsmith's art widespread in England in the ninth and tenth centuries and renowned over Europe at that time. Recent research has isolated a series of magnificent ivories to which an Anglo-Saxon origin is given with certainty for this same period.¹ But for some reason which I cannot understand, the capacity of the Anglo-Saxon people of England to carve stone has been denied them, except in the case of certain rustic and inferior works to which the title of Norman or Gothic would be inapplicable. Apparently a people whose artists were gifted with astonishing power of swift, nervous draughtsmanship, whose miniature-painters knew the subtlest use of color, and whose scribes wrote a script which had no equal in Europe at that time for beauty, were entirely unable to adorn the churches and public buildings, which we know them to have built, with any form of artistic stone sculpture. And this is the more remarkable when we see that they had a subtle and skillful plastic sense in carving, illustrated by the very lovely ivories which Anglo-Saxon artists were able to produce.

The whole question of Anglo-Saxon sculpture has, I think, been dominated by foreign schools of critics, particularly by those of France, and their views have been largely taken over by those English scholars who can

study their own art only from the standpoint of the Continent. It is admitted that in France the art of sculpture hardly existed before the eleventh century. "Since," say the experts, "Gothic sculpture in England, as well as Norman, is entirely dependent upon the course of development in France, therefore English sculpture in the pre-Norman period is equally dependent on conditions and styles of France." As recently as 1931 it has been stated that "all authorities are agreed as to the dearth of monumental sculpture in France before the end of the eleventh century. They are even scarcer in England, and where they can be identified, are of the rudest possible description and hardly merit the name of sculpture."²

Without disputing the fact that sculpture was, before the eleventh century, virtually

² Arthur Gardner: *Mediaeval Sculpture in France*, p. 3.

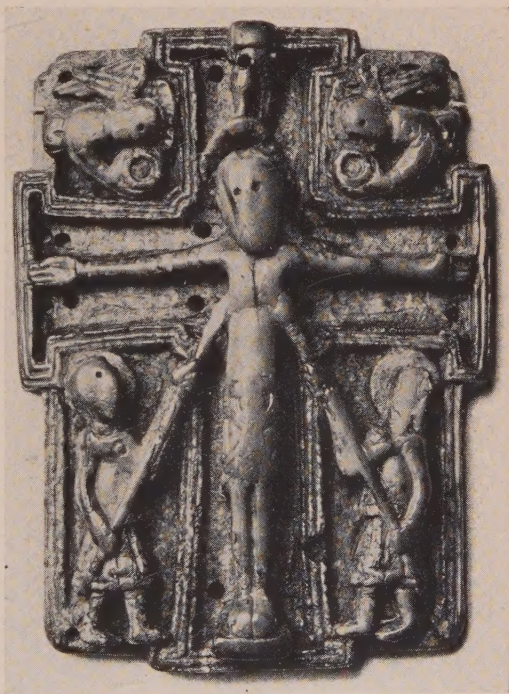


FIGURE 2
CRUCIFIX WITH LONGINUS AND STEPHATON
WALRUS IVORY

Collection South Kensington Museum, London

¹ M. H. Longhurst: *English Ivories*, pp. 1-27.

dead in Italy and France, and largely in Central Europe, and had been dead since the fifth century, there stands out at least the strange revival of sculpture of a high order in England in the seventh and eighth centuries, best exemplified by the Bewcastle and Ruthwell crosses, at a time when there was no similar activity in Europe. But renewed research makes it possible now to illustrate the existence of an even more distinguished school of sculpture of the period covered by the two centuries preceding 1066 and the Norman Conquest. At last the illogical and improbable situation indicated in my first paragraph can be resolved. If we abandon the *a priori* assumption that all English art came from France, we abandon with it the conclusion that there could have been no sculpture before the Norman Conquest. And so we find fall-

ing into their proper place a group of extremely lovely sculptures which agree in style, skill, and sophistication with the painting, drawing, and fine craftsmanship which admittedly belong to the late Saxon period. If, obstinately, we maintain our *a priori* assumption we are driven to the improbable conclusion that an obviously artistically gifted period was entirely sterile in sculpture.

The material which has slowly accumulated in recent years to illustrate Late Saxon or Anglo-Saxon sculptural genius comes from various sources. The segregation of the Saxon ivories gave a hint of style, iconography, and treatment in carving which suggested the existence of larger works. The larger works themselves have either been salvaged from a Norman limbo or else rescued from the almost complete oblivion into which they had fallen. Some actually new examples have been added by the normal process of archaeological discovery.

I am indeed astonished by the large number of Saxon sculptures which are to be found in the counties of England which remain hidden and forgotten in churches and walls, unphotographed, unmentioned and unsung. In this article I am illustrating one splendid rood that has never been photographed before; another rood of less merit, also not previously photographed; and a third, here fully illustrated, which has appeared only once before in a very inferior illustration.³ The last can rank as the finest Saxon sculpture in England and, indeed, as one of the greatest works of the art of sculpture in the country of any age.

There is, parallel with the finer and more sophisticated sculpture, a growth of rustic work in stone-carving in which local masons attempted to rival the skilled sculptors. It is significant only as an illustration of the widespread interest in sculpture in Saxon times. I do not propose here to illustrate the rustic work, nor to refer to it further, beyond suggesting that it is this rustic work, rejected by the Normanophiles as unworthy, which has up to now served to indicate the sculptural ability of the Saxons, with results which naturally



FIGURE 3
ROOD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE STONE
Wormington, Gloucestershire

³ Prior and Gardner: *Mediaeval Figure Sculpture in England*.



FIGURE 4
CRUCIFIXION WITH MARY AND ST. JOHN, LANGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE

enough brought considerable discredit upon them as artists!

Let us glance at some of the undoubtedly Saxon ivories of the Late Saxon period. The first (Figure 1) is a superb ivory crucifix now in the South Kensington Museum. It is mounted in a German setting of gold and enamel (though it is here shown apart from its setting). It is now generally agreed that this crucifix is Saxon work, probably imported to Germany, perhaps in the time of Bernward, Bishop of Hildersheim at the end of the tenth century.⁴ This carving can be taken as typical of the finest Saxon work. Features which are particularly common in Saxon art are the knotted loincloth, the *suppedaneum* to which the feet are nailed, and the material of which the carving is made, namely walrus-ivory.

The second ivory (Figure 2) here shown has a certain rustic quality about it. Like the first, it is of walrus-ivory and the figure of Christ has the feet nailed to a *suppedaneum*. Above the head is a *dextera Dei*. Below are the figures of Stephaton and Longinus, wearing haloes. The shape of the cross suggests a certain influence of Celtic art, where this type of cross is common. This ivory is also in the South Kensington Museum.⁵

Here we have two versions of a crucifix, varying in style and quality, though hardly in date. The main Saxon conventions of the crucifixion are shown here.

The first example of stone-carving (Figure 3) is to be seen in the small church of Wormington in Gloucestershire, near Broadway. It is built into the wall. Rustic in style, it yet contains the main essentials of the Saxon rood, taken over rather too literally. The sculptor has probably taken an ivory reliquary as his model. Here is the *dextera Dei*, exaggerated and clumsy, the semi-Celtic cross of our second ivory, the knotted loincloth of the first ivory, and the feet firmly held on the *suppedaneum*. The slavish treatment of the loincloth presupposes a very literal copyist. But he has failed with the face. This crucifix, clearly detached from its place of origin, is carved out of local Gloucestershire stone, and

had not received proper publication until 1933, when I published it in the *Burlington Magazine*.⁶ It is a small sculpture, being only eighty-two centimetres in height.

Next in order of the sculptures treated here is that shown in Figure 4. It comes from Oxfordshire, on the Gloucester border, from the church at Langford near Kelmscott, the home of William Morris. It is built into the upper part of the church porch. Here is the complete scene of the crucifixion with Mary and St. John. The *dextera Dei* is absent, but the feet are nailed to the usual support. Here also it is noteworthy that the Christ is carved from three blocks, one for the head, trunk, and legs, and one each for the arms and the subsidiary figures below them. The addition at some recent time of cement in the spaces between the figures and the Christ gives the impression that the figures are carved separately, but this is not the case.

Astonishingly enough, this finely carved composition has been neither published, referred to, nor photographed before by anyone. The very remarkable curving of the arms and painful upturning of the hands, as if the figure were in agony, is unusual and only to be paralleled in a not dissimilar relief of Saxon workmanship at Stepney,⁷ where the arms are similarly curved.

The fact that neither of these carvings has received attention has prevented them from being hastily classified as Norman or twelfth century, the fate which has befallen most of the well-known Saxon sculptures. Not so with the famous Romsey Rood in Romsey Abbey in Hampshire (Figure 5). The visitor to Romsey Abbey observes a notice in the Abbey, "This way to the Norman Rood," unshamedly placed on the wall. Sir Eric Maclagan unrepentently declares that it can hardly be "earlier than the 12th century."⁸ Yet in the lovely full-scale Romsey carving we meet the usual Saxon conventions of *dextera Dei*, rendered in the manner of that same device on coins of Edward the Elder, the

⁴ M. H. Longhurst: *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶ *Burlington Magazine*, January, 1933, p. 31. The photograph reproduced here was taken especially for the *American Magazine of Art*.

⁷ A. W. Clapham: *English Romanesque Architecture*, Plate 62.

⁸ *Burlington Magazine*, December, 1931, p. 325.



FIGURE 5
ROMSEY ROOD, ROMSEY ABBEY, HAMPSHIRE

same fixing of the feet, and still more definitely, since a technical matter, the utilization of three blocks of stone as in the undoubtedly Saxon rood on the front of the porch at Langford. If further proof were needed of the Saxon origin of the Romsey Rood, it can be found in the mutilated roods of Breamore in the New Forest, and Headbourne Worthy near Winchester, where once stood—though they survive now only in outline—two exactly similar roods incorporated in the fabric of Saxon churches. All three were clearly from a Winchester school of sculpture that was closely allied with the Winchester school of miniature painting.

I have described these sculptures in order of excellence. There is no doubt that the Wormington Rood is poor and rustic. But the Romsey Rood is a masterpiece of full-scale sculpture of the first rank.

But my last example is by far the most lovely (Figure 6). It is a rood of a wholly unusual type, unique in England, indeed, as I believe, unique in Europe. Like that shown in Figure 4, it is to be seen in the porch of the church at Langford, but, unlike the low relief shown in Figure 4, it is in very high relief. It is built into the east side of the same porch. It is almost life size and is in a tolerable state of preservation. It shows the Christ fully garbed in a *chiton*, loosely tied at the waist with a girdle. The head is missing and we have no means of telling whether it was bearded or clean-shaven. The absence of any trace of beard at the base of the neck gives some slight presumption for the view that it was clean-shaven. The *chiton* is cylindrical and graceful, and at the sides falls into long parallel folds. These folds are not apparent from a frontal view, but are clear in Figure 7. The most remarkable feature is the curving of the hands which droop as if the figure were dying.

The sculpture was published by Prior and Gardner very briefly and the tentative date of 1000 A.D. was given for it. Mr. A. W. Clapham⁹ has decided definitely for its Saxon origin, as I have myself in an earlier publication.¹⁰ The treatment of the feet, the

cold impersonal style, and the local stone of which it is made, suggest a Saxon origin. The arrangement of the stones also follows Saxon convention. The arms and breast and head are on one block, and the rest of the body on another, a different arrangement from that at Romsey, but one which employs large blocks in approximately the same way.

But most cogent is the fact that the church from which both this and the previous sculpture are derived is a Saxon church which has been largely altered and remade in later times. The bulk of the tower is still pure Saxon, as well as a large part of the nave and internal arches. Nor is there any sculpture of later periods, since the church was never a rich one and at no time very ostentatious. A third Saxon relief, much decayed, is to be seen in the Saxon tower, built into the south face.

This strange and lovely rood has given cause to much controversy. It has been compared with the Volto Santo at Lucca, and finds parallels in many Spanish works such as the Catalan crucifix in the Fine Arts Museum at Yale University, dated to the thirteenth century.

One thing is certain, that the rood is of local workmanship and not an import, for the stone is Cotswold stone. Equally certain is the fact that it stands in a setting which, artistically, is wholly Saxon. But the type of draped Christ is most familiar to students of Continental art at a date much later than the Saxon period.

Personally I have no hesitation in claiming for it a date in the tenth or eleventh century, as Saxon work of the highest order. That Saxons could carve as well as this is testified by their ivories and by the Romsey Rood. And further, the type of draped Christ, common enough in the Latin countries in the twelfth and thirteen centuries, appears much earlier in the East and in the Teutonic parts of the Carolingian Empire. A tenth century painting in a manuscript from Fulda, now in the Staatsbibliothek at Munich,¹¹ shows a draped figure of Christ, unbearded and hanging from the Cross in the same tragic way.

⁹ Op. cit., p. 138.

¹⁰ *Burlington Magazine*, November, 1931.

¹¹ *Propylaen-Kunstgeschichte* IV. Hauttmann: Die Kunst des frühen Mittelalters. Plate 303.



FIGURE 6
ROOD, LANGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE



FIGURE 7
ROOD, LANGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE
Note Folds in Chiton

The hands of the Langford Christ are its most remarkable feature; they droop from the nails. That otherwise unique feature is also found in the Fulda painting. Here too the hands are curved just as the hands of the Langford figure (Figure 8).

This is, I think, the clue to the origin of the type, and of this sculpture. The close connection maintained by the English court with that of the Ottonian kingdom allowed much intercourse between Germany and England. The first wife of Otto I was, indeed, an English princess. The type originated iconographically in Germany and was first developed in England in sculpture, if only because in the tenth and ninth centuries England was one of the few places in Europe where any sculpture at all was carved.

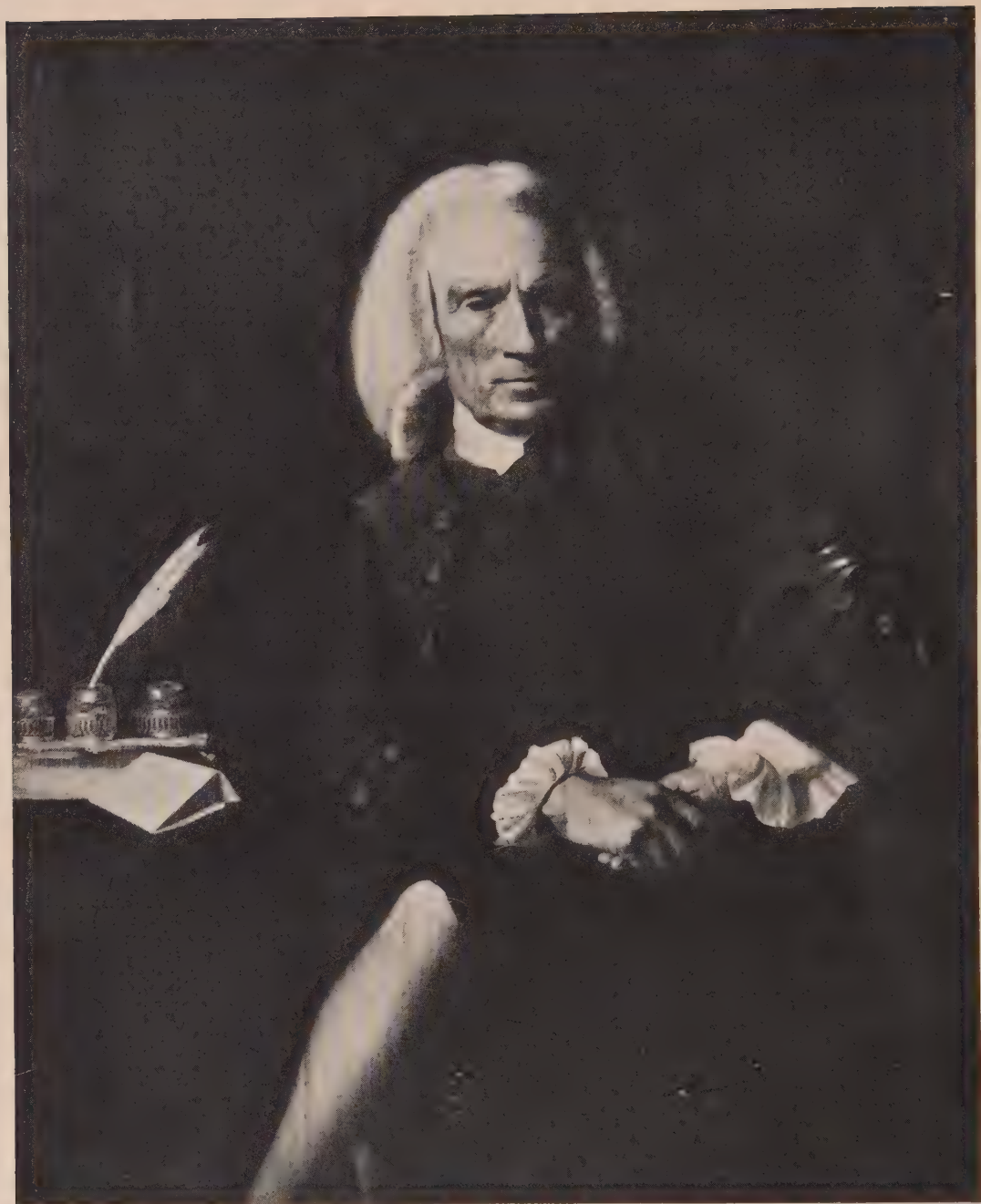
The main connection artistically was always between England and the northern parts of

Central Europe, rather than with France or Italy, during Saxon times. Saxon art was an aspect of the art of the Byzantine-Carolingian world, not of the Italy-Provence-Spanish world.

If we approach Saxon art with the assumption that it must be inferior to Continental art, or that it must be dependent on it, we shall fail to appreciate its native genius. While Saxon art cannot be severed from the continent, it is nevertheless an entirely free growth. The works illustrated here are but a fraction of the large accumulation of drawing, painting, stone-carving, and ivory work which can be assembled. England rarely asserts her claim to artistic preëminence because only at very rare intervals has she risen above the mediocre. But the late Saxon period was an age in which Saxon artists could challenge the artists of any part of Western Europe.



FIGURE 8
DETAIL, CHRIST'S RIGHT HAND, ROOD, LANGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE



JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY: JOHN ERVING

Courtesy John Langdon Erving, Esq.

AMERICAN ART: ITS ECONOMIC ASPECTS

By SUZANNE LA FOLLETTE

WHEN the historic band of pilgrims moored their bark on New England's inhospitable coast, they brought with them very little in the way of worldly wealth. They were of the lower middle class; and they were followed, in all the colonies, by thousands whom it had pleased God, as the English prayer book would have it, to call to the same station in life, and by other thousands whom He had pleased to call to a station so abject that they were obliged to sell themselves into temporary servitude in order to get their passage paid. With a few notable exceptions, the "rich and well-born" of the mother country were not attracted by the hardships of colonial life; they were doing very nicely at home and were under no temptation to accept present danger and discomfort for the sake of a future improvement in their lot. They preferred to enjoy their wealth in the security provided by a well-established civilization, and to increase it by financing the colonial enterprise of less fortunate and more adventurous folk.

The early colonists, therefore, were not only poor; they were in debt. Had they been ever so rich, colonial beginnings could not have been other than poor and hazardous; for of what use is it to have one's pockets full of money when it will buy neither goods nor labor? They found no settled population to be robbed and exploited, but only a vast expanse of virgin land, enormously rich in resources, inhabited by hunting tribes which turned hostile as soon as they realized that it was the intention of the newcomers not to share but to appropriate their hunting grounds.

Under such circumstances the amenities could hardly flourish; and art, of course, is one of the amenities. It requires, as the condition of its significant development, wealth and leisure. Not wealth and leisure for the individual artist; he is rarely born with the one, and art is too stern a task-mistress to permit him any great enjoyment of the other. But before art can flourish in any society, at

least a section of that society must be securely rich enough that its ambition ceases to be satisfied with the mere accumulation of wealth, and turns toward those satisfactions which wealth can provide—toward the enjoyment of luxury and the aesthetic pleasures. It was only after the colonial economy was well established on the basis of bond- and chattel-slavery, and a colonial aristocracy had emerged, that the arts had any noteworthy development in the English settlements of North America.

Thanks to the eagerness of British merchants and wealthy nobles to profit by colonial investment and trade, and a corresponding eagerness for economic opportunity among those classes known to the modern social worker as "the underprivileged," colonial development was rapid. And as wealth increased the more prosperous colonists relaxed somewhat that Puritan austerity which had fitted so well the rigors of the earlier colonial period. For no austerity, however strictly enjoined, can withstand the temptation to luxury and display that comes with the possession of wealth. The Puritan and middle-class preachment of self-denial, thrift, and hard labor had its effect on the colonial psychology; it has survived to give cold comfort to the poor of this day; but those in the higher income-brackets have long been tacitly recognized as exempt from its practice. Less than a century after the first settlements had struggled through to permanence, the Southern tobacco-planters and the Northern merchants, shipowners, and shipbuilders who had prospered were building fine houses, ordering fine furniture, and sitting in their best silks and satins to itinerant portrait-painters. In the modest way which fitted their modest prosperity, the colonists had begun to patronize the arts.

And as they were economically bound to the mother-country, so, quite naturally, they continued to be bound to it culturally. They followed English fashions in architecture; they imported or copied English furnishings



Photograph by Philip B. Wallace, Courtesy Fiske Kimball

ANDALUSIA ON THE DELAWARE (1834-36)

Built by Nicholas Biddle, President of the Bank of the United States

and clothing. And their emergent art of painting was formed by the only even passably good school of art that England has ever produced: that of the eighteenth century. It was fortunate for colonial painters that this school was chiefly one of portraiture, for it was upon the semi-utilitarian art of portraiture that they were forced to rely for their living. The colonial governments and churches were not rich enough to support the arts; and the Puritan iconoclasm of the Protestant churches was a further barrier to hope for commissions to paint religious subjects. Public art was pretty closely confined to architecture; the painter must look for support to private patrons. And the patron who wanted to possess works of art for their own sake was as the proverbial grain of wheat among those who wanted to possess likenesses of themselves or members of their families. It is not surprising, therefore, that the society which produced John Singleton Copley gave

to the world no important painting in any category other than portraiture.

The Revolution profoundly affected the development of American art, but it did not free it of its dependence upon the utilitarian and semi-utilitarian categories, for the excellent reason that the new republic was no richer than the colonies had been. Thomas Jefferson, who during his ambassadorship in France carefully studied the ancient classical architecture of Europe with a view to purifying the modern classicism of his country, paid little attention to European masterpieces of painting and sculpture. His keen sense of the practical taught him that "they are too expensive for the state of wealth among us." Had the artists of the period shared this perception, they would have been spared some bitter disappointments. For a generation they had been going to London to study under their famous compatriot, Benjamin West, who was enabled by royal patronage to paint what

Gilbert Stuart called “ten-acre canvases,” treating historical and religious subjects. And now that they found themselves citizens of a free and independent republic they aspired to paint the stirring history of their country on the walls of its public buildings, in emulation of their revered master. But such commissions were few. The American people were not averse to celebrating their new greatness, but they were not wealthy enough to accord any significant patronage to artists ambitious to paint ten-acre canvases.

And so the most nationalistic period American art has known, produced, except in the again utilitarian category of architecture, few public monuments to the nationalist spirit. As for the private citizen, his republican pride was content with engraved or painted portraits of Revolutionary heroes, especially Washington; engravings of Revolutionary battles; modest paintings and engravings of familiar bits of landscape or views of the republic’s growing cities; chintzes and china (imported) bearing motifs from American



EAGLE,
From
Pawtucket,
Rhode Island

Courtesy
Museum
of Modern
Art



SAMUEL
VERNON
(1683-1737):

THE HAVEN'S
SILVER
TANKARD

Collection
Cleveland
Museum
of Art

scenery or history; and a plentiful use of the Republican eagle as a motif in interior decoration.

If American art was more nationalistic during the early years of the republic than it has ever been, it was more national during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. But where the one phase was due to the Revolution, the other was due largely to causes which had little to do with national pride. Independence had loosened the economic ties which bound the colonies to England, and a loosening of cultural ties inevitably followed. The Napoleonic wars made it difficult for American artists to go abroad for study, and the world-wide depression which followed them made for the continued isolation of this country from the European cultural tradition. This isolation was increased by that national turning away from Europe toward the Western frontier which

characterized the early republic. The American nation had become preoccupied with the extension and exploitation of its vast territories; its wealth and its energies were poured into Western speculative development. The frontier, with its lack of any cultural tradition, had become, and for a century would remain, the dominant factor in American life.

Thanks to all these causes, American art became pretty much a national product; and thanks to these causes it declined. For its isolation from the main current of European tradition (which in spite of new political and geographic frontiers was its own tradition) made it provincial, and the American preoccupation with material development enfeebled its growth. There were no masterpieces in this country to which the artists might turn for instruction, no living masters, and few even passably good artists. Schools

were few, and the Puritanical prejudice against studies of the nude figure handicapped their efforts. The art of the period faithfully reflected all these adverse influences. And as if they were not enough, the Industrial Revolution knocked from under it, as from European art, the immemorial prop of the handicrafts. Beauty and fitness in the industrial arts, and in architecture as well, all but disappeared before the gew-gaws which the wonderful new machines poured into the lap of a delighted century. Portrait-painting declined with the advent of the camera; and the most fashionable of the portrait painters who managed to survive were those who cultivated a photographic naturalism.

When American artists turned to Europe, as they did in increasing numbers toward the end of this period, they were faced with the problem of discriminating between art and the pseudo-art with which a great many skillful painters and sculptors, who before the Industrial Revolution might have been good artisans, were pandering to the bad taste of the newly dominant middle class. In the thirteenth century the bourgeoisie, in revolt alike against the nobles and the clergy, and fired with a common faith in a myth which had not yet lost its power to kindle the imagination, had produced the magnificent art of the cathedrals. In the nineteenth, triumphant at last over the clergy and the nobles, it had no common faith left in anything except its own right to enrich itself; and that is hardly a faith to fire the creative spirit. The best the middle class could do was to create the pseudo-art of the school which mouthed for it the platitudes it wanted to hear, in a debased jargon which was believed to be the language of the masters. Meanwhile the artists carried on the great tradition outside the school, execrated alike by its kept artists and their doting public. Nor did the artists turn the other cheek. On the contrary, they carried on a lively warfare; and if the school could exclude them from opportunities to execute great public commissions and from a great deal of private patronage, it could not exclude them from ultimate victory, although sometimes the victory came so late that only the dealers profited.

If our belated art of sculpture leaned heavily and mistakenly on the milk-and-water classicism of Thorwaldsen and Canova, it was not solely because American taste was provincial. That school enjoyed a tremendous vogue in Europe. And if many American painters went all the way to Düsseldorf, and later to Munich and the official school of France, to acquire mistaken notions of painting, they did what a great many European students were eagerly hastening to do. They were all victims of the great schism which had divided the world of art. And to the credit of the Americans it may be said that the abler men among them were as quick to distinguish between the false and the true as their European contemporaries.

Back in America, these men took up the fight against the ignorance and sentimentality of our own academies; and since that time the art-world of this country, like that of Europe, has been divided into artists and pseudo-artists, with the latter enjoying most of the public commissions. They exercised, moreover, quite an influence upon collectors, and upon the museums which were being established; and by no means to their own financial interest, for they had much to do with the vogue which foreign pictures and pictures began to enjoy here during the last quarter of the century.

From the earliest colonial days, paintings, engravings, and some sculpture had been imported into this country. The more prosperous citizens had even bought old masters of more or less doubtful authenticity, or commissioned American painters abroad to make copies for them. But during the middle period what market there was for works of art was pretty much the monopoly of American artists. The Congress commissioned American painters to decorate the interior walls of the Capitol with scenes from American history, and Italianate American sculptors to embellish the exterior. The Government was ready to give some support to art; but the artists were not equal to the tasks assigned them. In 1876 an unkind critic described the national collection as a national disgrace. It was in those halcyon days before the Centennial, too, that fantastic prices were



THOMAS CRAWFORD: JAMES OTIS

Originally at Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts; now in the possession of Harvard University

paid by private purchasers for the panoramic landscapes of Church and Bierstadt, and that American genre pieces and the thin landscapes of the Hudson River school were hung over the horsehair sofas and the whatnots.

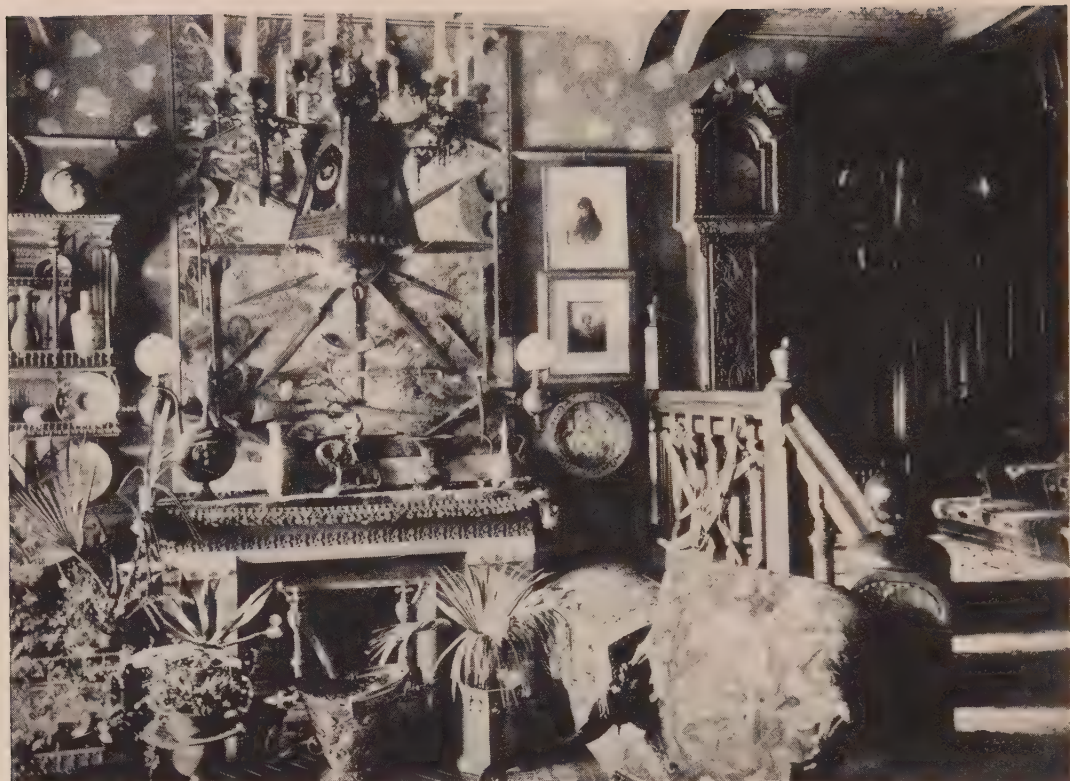
But fabulous fortunes had been amassed in speculative exploitation of the country's resources and of the Civil War. American millionaires could afford to possess authentic old masters. They could afford, too, to build quite correctly Gothic or Renaissance palaces in place of the illiterate imitations which had fittingly housed the Hudson River landscapes and the fretted marbles of the Italianates. But, although it was done occasionally, the importation of old houses was hardly practicable. So the native architect went to Paris, where he learned at the Beaux Arts how to handle in scholarly fashion the archaism into which architecture everywhere had fallen. He returned to build the great houses and public buildings of his country. But the painters and sculptors were not so lucky. The millionaires had begun that intensive looting of the old world which has filled our museums and private collections with the masterpieces of mediaeval and Renaissance Europe. As I have already intimated, it also became fashionable to sit to imported portrait-painters and to buy modern European works, chiefly of the French school. Never, probably, since the days when the Romans helped themselves to the incredible treasures of Greece, has there been such a tremendous movement of works of art as that which has been flowing to America during the past half century.

This return of Americans to the European sources of their culture has been the outstanding fact of American cultural development during that period. It was made possible by an extraordinary and rather widely diffused prosperity, and a greatly increased ease of transportation. Not only millionaires in pursuit of old masters, but a host of artists, scholars, and ordinary trippers have descended yearly upon Europe, save during those periods when war or depression has cut down the host to a handful.

It has its good and bad aspects, but there it is. The nationalist may rail at the American taste for foreign works of art; he is right only

if that taste results in the importation of bad works. He may contend that American patronage should go to American artists; he is right only if American artists can produce works as good as or better than the foreign product. For quality is the only valid criterion of art. Had the United States followed a policy of cultural nationalism during the past half-century, American artists would no doubt have prospered much better financially, but both artists and public would have been poorer; for we should not have those magnificent collections which today teach the visitors to our museums what has been produced in graphic and plastic art and the handicrafts, in that cultural tradition to which by virtue of their European ancestry they belong.

The strong trend toward economic nationalism since the War has brought about a marked trend toward nationalism in art. It is becoming fashionable to buy American works, to ransack the hinterland for old American furniture and samples of American folk-art (quality no object), and to discover that Cézanne was over-rated. This chauvinism is less unfortunate than it would be if we did not have the great collections of which I have spoken, and some artists, also, who carry in their heads a good deal of what Cézanne and the other great men of his century have taught the modern world. What the country needs, really, is not nationalism but localism; for to the vast number of communities where art is simply non-existent, the wealth of the museums in a few centres of population is of no advantage. Local artists, deriving their material from the daily life of the people, could (if they could keep themselves alive, spiritually and physically) help these communities to a richer life; and a richer life would help to overcome that spiritual malaise which a generation of commentators have publicized, and which is the price the American people are paying for having been too busy for culture. We have built magnificently on the material side, we Americans, at the expense of the artistic and intellectual side of life. And now we face the disconcerting fact that a culture cannot be built in a day or a decade: that it takes centuries; and that without it we are unhappy.



INTERIOR, PARVENU PERIOD

Courtesy the Art Institute of Chicago

We must face, too, the even more disconcerting fact that the wealth for which we sacrificed so much is being steadily concentrated in fewer hands, and that the wealth of the smaller communities is steadily being drained off to a few great centres. Under these circumstances, I think we need hardly hope for any very significant development of the arts in the smaller communities—nor indeed, among the workers and middle classes anywhere. A few figures will make this clear. In the boom year 1928, according to tables compiled by Mr. Lewis Corey, the farmer's average income was \$923; that of the wage worker, \$1,189; that of the clerical worker, \$1,350; that of the small bourgeois, \$2,575. And these four classes together made up 93.1 per cent of the total population. In the first year of the New Deal, according to the

income tax figures, incomes above \$5,000 increased 22 per cent; taxable incomes below \$5,000 decreased 16 per cent; while the number of people reporting incomes of \$1,000,000 or over increased from twenty to forty-six.

The vast majority of Americans find themselves today in the position of the early colonists. They are too poor to support the arts. The American artist, like his predecessors—Egyptian, Athenian, Roman, Florentine—finds himself dependent upon the good will of the small class which controls the wealth of his country. What this condition will mean for the future of the arts in the United States only time can tell. It is a heavy responsibility which rests upon our wealthy class—but it is one which, with the sublime irresponsibility of wealth, they may choose to carry lightly, even frivolously.

MODERN ART AND THE SPATIAL WORLD

By WALTER F. ISAACS

MUCH of the progress that has been made in the modern age has been due to the prevailing tendency to divide complex problems into their elements and attack these elements separately. Such divisions in the fields of philosophy and science, during the past three centuries, have been carried to what appears to be almost the ultimate degree. The solutions of complicated problems have become possible once the fundamental elements have been perceived, each obstacle being overcome when it has been isolated. In the realm of art a similar method has been used, although it has not been so clearly interpreted to the public as in the case of science, due no doubt to the general conviction that art does not by its nature lend itself readily to analytical study.

The artist has too often been regarded as an inspired individual bearing a message within, to which he is about to give expression. Actually there is little within an artist except the power to react to situations, and he should be concerned less with giving forth self-expression than with the correction of his environment. These two conceptions may be one and the same thing, but they are not equally profitable in the business of explaining the nature of art. The art problem must be seen in its separate phases and in regard to the various methods to be employed in its solution. If the product is studied as a reaction to a situation, then the artist is given a place in the world in which we live and we see more clearly the working processes of the creative mind.

To understand painting it is essential to realize that any picture must be a compromise, an attack on a limited part of the field. Any other kind of attempt by the painter can result only in a confused effort to do the impossible. The ensemble of nature is too complicated for anything like complete representation, and brushes, paint, and canvas require simplified methods if chaos is not to prevail. The painter must proceed with a clear conception of the separate elements of

the mass of resistance which he is certain to meet. What are these elements?

As an artist approaches his easel to begin a painting, he finds himself confronted by a flat rectangular canvas. With brushes and paint he hopes to render this white surface acceptable to the public and satisfactory to himself. He is not, let us suppose, carrying in his mind's eye any image or vision which he might feel impelled to reproduce, but comes with an open mind upon a situation which is to call forth some sort of response. It remains to be seen what the reaction will be.

In feeble hands, the result may contribute nothing and be less valuable than what existed in the beginning. This frequently happens. The canvas in its original state had, at least, clarity, simplicity and precision—and this is more than can be said of a great many pictures. Although, as has been mentioned, the canvas has certain qualities which from the standpoint of art are desirable, there is one quality which must be condemned, in view of the potential masterpiece. It is not its color, texture, or shape. It is its uncompromising flatness. This feature presents itself as the arch-enemy of artistic achievement. On a large scale it would be an impenetrable wall obstructing vision. The primeval impulse of any creature when confronted by such a barrier would be to remove it, turn from it, or crash through it.

By contrast, how alluring is infinite space! The charm of the open road has been universally acclaimed, and one could hardly escape being reminded that the power to move freely in space is one of the great heritages of the upper classes of the animal kingdom. The joy of existence in free space is taken for granted in our daily round of activities, because we give no thought to the glory of its presence since we have never known its absence. But for the artist it must be of prime importance. One of the most engaging factors in nature is the airy infinity which surrounds us, in which we may climb to great heights, plunge beneath a wave, or sweep

across the earth's surface in swift-moving devices. Certainly the desire to penetrate and explore space is one of our elemental characteristics.

To break down the flatness and monotony of the canvas so that there shall appear something of the essence of the outside world requires the solution of some very stubborn problems. We observe real objects in a continuous succession which ends only at infinity—the horizon; while the picture in which we hope to represent these objects must end abruptly at four sides. The natural field of vision, moreover, is a circle with vignetted edges, the spectacle before us expanding in all directions, and gradually becoming invisible. And not only are these difficulties to be faced, but there is another factor which might seem to render the whole affair hopeless. Each man stands at the center of his world of natural space. Our conception of our surroundings must be ego-centric, and we never can stand in this relationship to a picture. We are within nature, but outside pictures.

In many cases distance has been suggested by ineffectual means. From the beginning of the Renaissance, the painting of the Western world has been built up with much dependence on perspective. This mechanical device, while it has been used by the greatest masters of the Occident, has brought about an abundance of weak paintings in which distance is represented, or at least suggested, solely by the use of linear and aerial perspective, giving a superficial appeal to the casual observer. These alone give inadequate presentation of the effect of space. Two converging lines suggest a receding road. Painting a mountain blue tells the observer that great distance intervenes, but this alone is of slight effect. Linear and aerial perspective increase the illusion, but the result must still be called inadequate if one considers the appropriate use of the artist's materials, because lines and colors as used in painting are subject to a set of principles which are not the same as those which apply to natural light and three-dimensional space.

An illustration that has been used in the past to make clear the meaning of reality in painting is to compare the picture with a view

through an open window. The Barbizon painters are reported to have been pleased when a critic made such a comparison. But the illustration is not so apt as it at first appears. A view through a window is not a true exposition of the phenomenon of our perceptions, because the view is limited and also because the material that is visible does not, unless by chance, bear any special relationship to the window. It becomes true only when the casement and a portion of the surrounding wall are taken into consideration, so that the normal field of vision may prevail. The difference in effect on our feelings in the two instances is marked. The one has the quality of constriction and compression, the other a glorious release. This difference may be clearly marked in good and bad pictures, and the causes of it may be understood and controlled.

How can objects, when represented within abrupt bounding lines, be given something of the living essence which real objects possess? It can be done only by expert designing, such as will unify the given area with its contents. Obviously a strong diagonal tends to overcome the verticals and horizontals of the frame lines. A diamond within a square has been offered by a famous painter as the beginning of the solution, the attention of the observer being, by that arrangement, to some extent taken away from the original shape. The slanting lines stand completely in opposition to the original area. A balance is established. Next, some repetition of the rectangle is needed to bring harmony, and then various echoes of the diamond will appear, and further changes, for contrast or agreement, elaboration upon elaboration, balancing of line against line, and color against color, repetitions and oppositions with increasing finesse, guided by the senses of the artist, until finally, as if by magic the tension of the frame lines has been released, dry canvas has melted into deep space and the vision of the observer moves over an enchanted area with an exuberance akin to that felt in surveying the land and sky of the open world.

Some of the most precise records of penetrating observation are to be found in the works of Cézanne. An observer of his pic-

tures seems to be confronted by a block of deep space extending consistently from one frame line to the other. Here there seems to exist a section of reality itself suspended in a monumental repose—a vital matrix for the objects it contains. Cézanne's painting immediately arouses the consciousness of depth and solidity, rather than lateral movement, as when one observes the approaching prow of a ship one feels the great mass and weight from which the visible part is projecting, a powerful effect, which is absent if the ship is viewed from the side. The full appreciation of this value in Cézanne's painting is best realized if the vision is focused on the entire area of the picture space, ignoring details. As in problems encountered in other fields, the broadest aspect of a situation—which means viewing the whole object at once—must be the final criterion of value, and in most cases it will be the point of approach also. However interesting the parts of Cézanne's pictures may be, one cannot help being convinced that his attention rarely left the totality of his canvas, not merely the major portions, but precisely all of it, from edge to edge.

Cézanne knew the combinations of lines which, regardless of perspective, contribute to an effect of depth. He has, in discussing painting, told of the value of the vertical line in representing distance. Many of his pictures show this device clearly, as when a tree trunk extends vertically entirely across the space—a violation of older conventions—or in the case of his well-known barnyard scene in which the upright side of a nearby building occupies the entire left edge. This is one instance of Cézanne's care in adapting his forms to the shape of the canvas, and this designing seems to contribute to the effect of reality as well as to beauty of pattern.

There is a peculiarity in the mechanics of our seeing which has a mysterious effect on the requirements of pictorial composition, and that is our binocular vision. The charm of our perceptions seems to be due partly to the double vision with which we are normally equipped. The stereoscopic quality which derives from this must remain one of the most charming mysteries of life experience. The

old-fashioned stereoscope never ceases to incite wonder when, as if by some miraculous power, it transforms a dull flat drawing into a vital realistic scene. Can the painter imitate this? If at all, only by skillful composition. Consciously or not, the serious painter must take this phenomenon into account. In Cézanne's most highly developed phases there is an uncanny expression of the stereoscopic quality even though in his best work he retains a certain flatness of effect.

Not only is the fact of the double image important but the position which the eyes occupy in the human head seems to effect the problem of pictorial arrangement. Were the eyes placed in a vertical line instead of an horizontal one—absurd as the thought may seem—the principles of composition would have to be radically altered. To be fully aware of this it is only necessary to tip the head so as to bring the eyes into a vertical line, and sense the result. That this feature of the sense of sight must have a strong bearing on the number of verticals to be used in a picture is obvious.

In Cézanne's pictures there are many examples of ingenious methods of achieving verticals, as in his wood interiors and landscapes. Even in his well-known studies of lakes, where the major lines of the original scene were horizontal, he has found ways to create the effect of verticality by arranging objects or colors, one above another, so as to create a leading succession in the desired order. "Landscape with Old Houses" is based on a scene in which the main lines are horizontal but the verticals are created as suggested above, but designing, being scarcely noticeable to the casual eye. So is it in the long series of paintings of Mount Saint Victoire. Why does the mountain retire into the distance with such convincing effect, and the valley extend before it in a definitely horizontal plane? Not merely because of perspective and matched colors, but because of skillfully planned line and color structure fitted into the area of the canvas.

One further remarkable feature of our perceptions is rather closely related to the stereoscopic effect. That is the matter of the broken line—the discontinuity of form. Just why in

paintings the contours of the human body should appear to be severed, a section out of line, a bit of the environment passing into the figure, has troubled many amateur observers of modern painting. Such practice on the part of the artist may be thought to suggest either careless workmanship or artistic blasphemy. But, after all, it is only one phase of loyalty to nature. In nature we do not see things in their continuity. Experience, even without the psychologist's proof—which in itself is conclusive—is sufficient to show that the eye does not follow the lines of a curve, but, on the contrary, leaps from point to point. So it is that, as one looks at the contour of a vase, the attention may fix itself now on the upper right hand segment, then on the lower left, and again leap to the top, and so on, to establish a more or less complete acquaintance with the form. It would be only with effort, if at all, that the eye could be required to trace continuously an object's outlines. To attempt to observe the contour of a curved object—a dinner plate, for example—in such manner, is sufficient to reveal the prevalence of this habit of summary observation.

To what extent the artist will cause his canvas to disappear in an illusion of distance depends upon his taste. If, conceivably, he were able to achieve a perfectly naturalistic representation, he would fail of the highest values, because he would have violated his language of flat surfaces. To say that a picture should be at the same time both deep and flat sounds paradoxical, but it states the problem that faces the painter. This dual nature of pictures provides much of their charm, and it offers to the artist one of the most fascinating of the problems that try his ingenuity.

The expression of three-dimensional space reduced approximately to one plane is achieved by the overlapping of objects with the intervening space removed, so that the whole setting is telescoped, so to speak, from back to front. The scene appears in condensed form. The distant mountain is brought forward by the elimination of perspective lines and colors, as in certain Japanese prints, where lines indicating the boards of a floor frequently converge toward a forward point instead of into

the distance, thus reversing our form of perspective and flattening the picture. Long horizontal lines tend to hold all forms near the surface of the canvas. Thus the technical means of arriving at either a deep or a flat effect are relatively simple.

It might seem that there is no danger of a picture's having too much depth, that the observer is never deceived or led to think that the scene is real, and so there would be no need of consciously flattening it or doing anything else to prevent illusion. But the picture is an object in itself, a flat surface as well as a representation of a scene. Many painters prefer to bring this feature into clear visibility and to render it as a consciously achieved product, making it easy for the observer to be aware that a picture has this dual nature, and that the artist expects him to note that fact. The two elements must of course be unified, contributing to the essential requisite of all art—the perfect oneness of effect. Such an ideal in painting meets the modern demand for directness in actions and for simplification. Long intervals between objects as they retire into the distant parts of a scene cause a degree of discontinuity in the attention of the observer as his interest passes from one object to another.

It may appear that such a procedure of condensing is a strange manner of seeking an effect of reality, that it would result in overcrowding, and that the spaciousness of nature would be lost. But the fluidity and unrestraint of reality are accounted for in the harmonious adjustment of objects and intervals on the flat surface. In such painting there is usually not the aim of complete restriction to one plane, but rather that of a discreet handling of the third dimension in terms of a flat canvas.

It is to be admitted that the ideal presented in the above paragraphs represents a rather rarefied and tenuous philosophy. It belongs to the so-called "advanced guard" in art. But it is no less valid for that. No doubt many of these effects in masterpieces are the results of intuition, but to understand them is an aid to learning.

Art, like some other phases of modern life,

(Continued on page 384)



THE LAST JUDGMENT, FIFTEENTH-CENTURY FLEMISH TAPESTRY

Acquired by the Worcester Art Museum

SPEAKING ABOUT ART

By PHILIPPA WHITING

THE fifteenth-century Flemish tapestry illustrated above provides the Worcester Art Museum with an acquisition of the greatest importance. Woven in Brussels in the famous atelier of Maître Philippe, it was executed from cartoons evidently by a Flemish painter of the Bruges and Brussels schools, influenced by Jan Van Eyck, Roger van der Weyden, and Memling. The tapestry was originally in the collection of Manoel I, King of Portugal, and remained in Portugal until recently. It is considered the finest composition of a celebrated series and fills a deplorable deficiency in the Museum's collections in the field of Flemish painting.

Photographic Corpus

The Museum of Modern Art has recently announced that it has received a grant from the General Education Board to make a photographic record of the Exhibition of African Negro Art, most important exhibition of its kind ever shown in this country and probably the most important ever assembled in the world. About four hundred and fifty objects will be photographed, and the collection will be known as the Photographic Corpus of African Negro Art. Six sets will be distributed to Negro colleges, one set to the

135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library. One set will be kept in the library of the Museum of Modern Art, and five sets will go at a nominal fee to museums and universities. Walker Evans has been engaged to make the photographs.

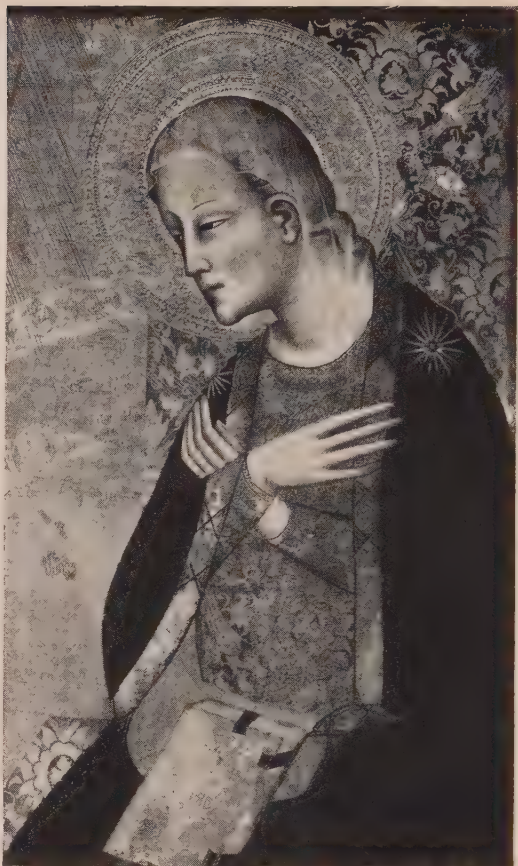
Nearly half the objects in the exhibition are being kept in this country to make up a circulating exhibition which will tour the United States for more than a year.

Folk Art Year

This is certainly folk art year. The exhibition of Pennsylvania Folk Arts, held by the National Committee on Folk Arts in the United States at its headquarters, 673 Fifth Avenue, New York, was extended through the whole of May, its closing having been postponed four times because of popular interest. It was one of the rotating loan exhibitions of American folk arts carried on by the National Committee as part of its permanent folk arts service. The Committee is the United States Section of the International Commission on Folk Arts, created in 1928 under the auspices of the League of Nations. Thirty countries are represented in this Commission united for the promotion, assembling, recording, and protection of the folk arts.

Del Biondo Fragments

TWO fragments from a trecento Florentine Annunciation by Giovanni del Biondo have been purchased from Richard Ederheimer of New York by the Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo. The pictures were published by Lionello Venturi as being by Spinello Aretino, but Berenson and Offner both attribute them to Giovanni del Biondo. Dr. Offner says: "... their painter is indisputably Giovanni del Biondo at a time when he was still working in the shadow of the Orcagna shop." Among the finest paintings by the master in this country is the central part of a large altarpiece in the Jarves Collection at New Haven. Since coming into the possession of the Albright Gallery, these panels have been carefully cleaned, and the colors are now brilliantly clear and harmonious. They form a highly important addition to the Gallery's nucleus of Italian painting.



TWO PANELS FROM AN ANNUNCIATION BY GIOVANNI DEL BIONDO.
ABOVE, THE VIRGIN; AT LEFT,
ANGEL



MARTIN SCHÖNGAUER: CRUCIFIXION

Recently acquired by the Worcester Art Museum



RUSSELL BARNETT AITKEN
BOY WITH POSSUMS

(Special Award, Ceramic Sculpture)

CLEVELAND

WHITNEY ATCHLEY: ENAMEL PLAQUE,
MADONNA AND CHILD

(Purchased for the Mary Spedding Milliken
Collection)



THE Cleveland Museum has recently hung its annual exhibition of the work of Cleveland artists and craftsmen—with its generous list of awards, and the Museum's inevitable purchases. To Cleveland, the May Show is just a natural and inevitable part of the year, but artists in other cities might well envy the civic policy which the exhibition symbolizes. William M. Milliken, in his foreword to the catalogue, says with justifiable conviction, "Cleveland has done more for its own artists than any other city in America. The Museum has profoundly believed in them, and during the past sixteen annual exhibitions it has seen the seed planted and a rich harvest reaped. Patronage has done it. The essence which is creative does not come to fruition in a desert." In sixteen years, twenty-six hundred and eighty-one objects have been sold from the exhibition; \$164,247.03 has been paid to Cleveland artists. Private individuals have contributed most.

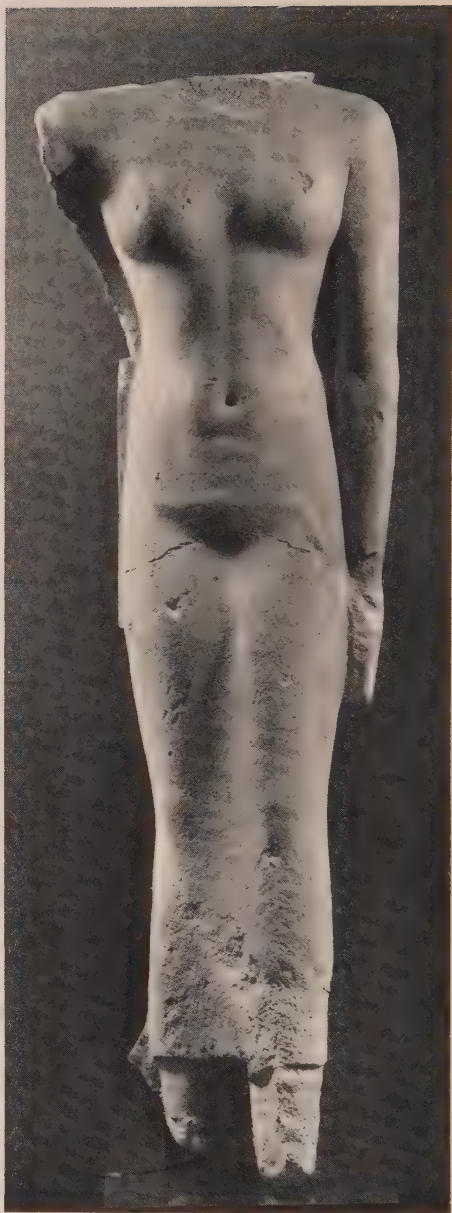


CLARENCE H. CARTER: CREEPERS (First Prize, Oil Landscape)

HENRY G. KELLER: IN THE MENAGERIE



ON THE opposite page is illustrated the small Bernardo Daddi triptych purchased by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. It is in almost perfect preservation, the colors rich and glowing. A Florentine by training, Daddi was profoundly influenced by Siennese painting, by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in particular. The triptych is typical of Daddi's style and is probably a work of his late middle period, in which the Siennese influence becomes increasingly important. At right, the magnificent female torso (2700 B.C.) which the Worcester Museum considers its second most important acquisition of the year, the first being the tapestry shown on page 349. It is one of the finest life-size Egyptian figures to be brought to this country, and is particularly significant for the subtlety and refinement of the modelling. The manuscript illumination reproduced below was included in the Fogg Art Museum Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts and Old Master Drawings from the J. P. Morgan Collection.



FOURTH DYNASTY EGYPTIAN TORSO

SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Thirteenth Century French Manuscript



BERNARDO DADDI: PORTABLE TRIPTYCH ALTAR

Recently acquired by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

FORMS OF ART: IV

PHASES OF CALLIGRAPHY

By E. M. BENSON

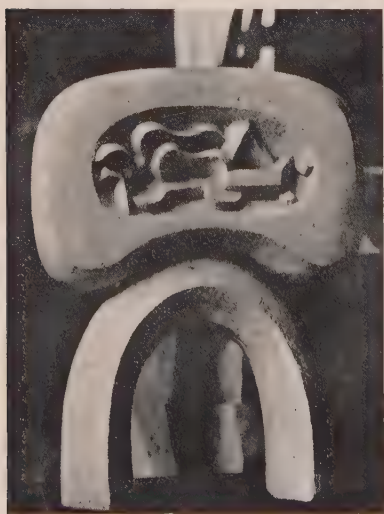
"No matter how varied the outward appearances due to differences of race and civilization, the fundamentals of art are the same everywhere and pertain to the same mental attitudes."
From *Chinese Painters*, by Raphael Petrucci.

YOUR dictionary will tell you that "calligraphy" is the art of writing beautifully. But don't let that distress you. To lexicographers, calligraphy is only one word among thousands. Until very recently it was the exclusive property of the philologist and the art historian and it was used by them to classify—with their traditional disregard for aesthetic considerations—those documents in which man, the most primitive as well as the most civilized, had attempted to set down his thoughts and feelings in picture-signs, in words, or some variable combination of both. Largely as a result of the numerous sources in the arts of the past to which the contemporary artist has gone to quench his thirst, and his subsequent preoccupation with the analysis of these sources, the term calligraphy has outgrown its dictionary definition and has taken on broader implications. It is now also used to describe by inference those works of art which, by the directness of their pictorial statement (Van Gogh, etc.), by their intensity or fluidity of touch (Tintoretto, etc.), by the plastic condensation of their forms (Cézanne, etc.), or for any other reason, suggest some elemental characteristic of a written language

—either the highly conventionalized, non-pictorial, alphabetic forms of Graeco-Roman origin, or those which have never developed beyond the pictographic or hieroglyphic stage, such as the Egyptian, the Mayan, the American Indian, and the Chinese.

I do not mean to give the impression that our recognition of this affinity between the forms of written language and the so-called forms of art is solely the result of the lengthy excursions which contemporary artists have made into the arts of the past, for that was only a contributing cause. Freshly crystallized elements in contemporary society also helped pave the way to this wider perception. But it was our artists who, through their work, communicated their awareness of these elements to us.

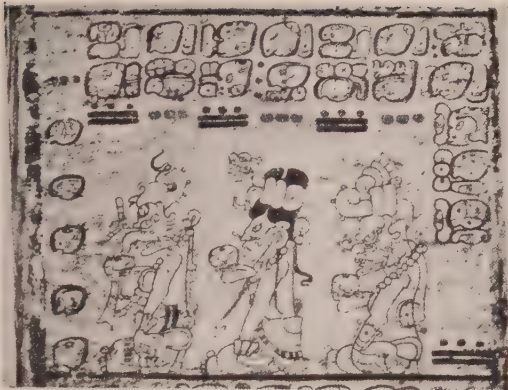
Let me indicate briefly what I mean. An industrialized society based on private profit requires an ever-expanding outlet for the products of industry. This audience can only be secured, maintained, and increased by means of competitive salesmanship; competition enlists advertising, the written or printed word which in countless seductive forms encourages us to become life members of the



(Left) JACQUES LIPCHITZ: *Idol* (Stone Sculpture) c.1924. Courtesy the artist. (Above) PETROGLYPH, Virgin Islands, West Indies

“conspicuous waste” club. “Buy me!” shouts the billboard poster. “BUY ME!” roar thousands of illuminated display signs. Written and printed words are constantly exploding before our eyes with a new message, in a new, more startling and ingenious arrangement. They have become part of the contemporary scene, like the buildings, the streets, and the people who inhabit them. Whether for good or for evil, they have become a dominant factor in our daily visual experience.

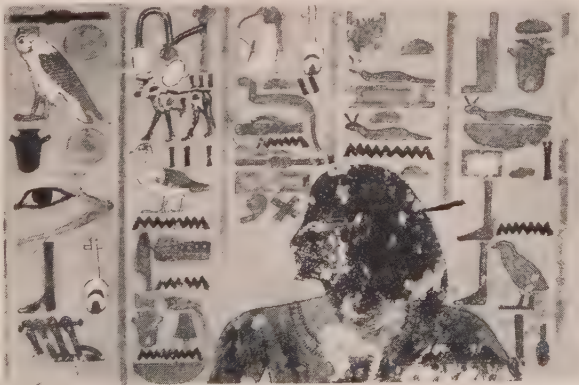
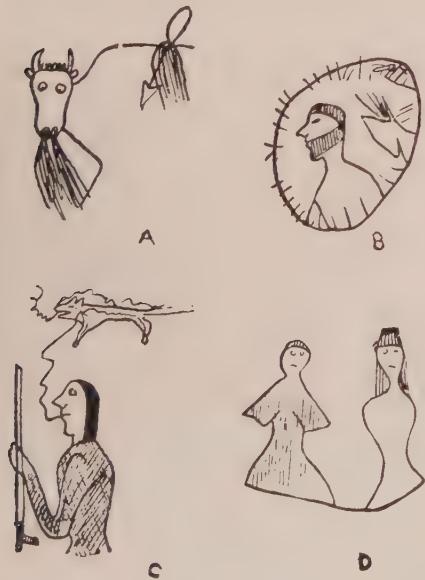
The creative artist, being more visually impressionable than most of us, detected the emergence of these new forms while they were still fledglings; but it was neither the painter nor the sculptor, hemmed in by orthodoxy and tradition, who first put them to work, but the photographer—shackled to no conventionalized ways of seeing or doing. In the late '80's, Alfred Stieglitz and Eugène Atget, the one in New York and the other in Paris, and each unaware of the other's existence, gave us, in their photographs, the earliest forecast of the role that the printed word was to play in twentieth century art. A dozen or more years before the first cubist picture included script as an element of design, Stieglitz made his “Five Points” photograph, and Atget, haunting the streets of Paris before others had risen from their beds, photographed the gilded, Gothic name-scrolls on storefronts, the price-tags attached to mannequins in shop-windows. What was to remain aesthetically



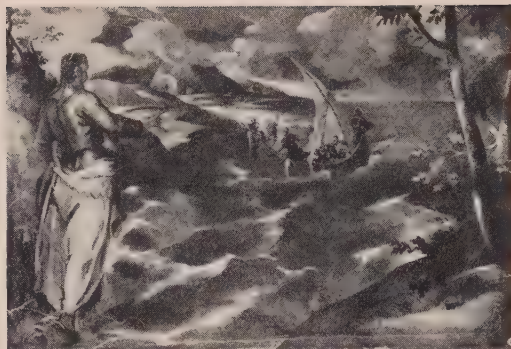
MAYAN HIEROGLYPHIC MANUSCRIPT, Detail from the so-called Dresden Codex. Pre-Columbian



TORRES-GARCIA: Composition (painting) 1932. Gallery of Living Art, New York University



(Left) DAKOTA WINTER COUNTS (detail), American Indian pictographic record for the years 1835-40. (Above) EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHIC INSCRIPTION, from door-jamb of Theban tomb. Eighteenth dynasty. (1500-1450 B.C.) Metropolitan Museum of Art



TINTORETTO: Christ Walking on the Water (Painting). Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

unseen and unused for many years by innovators in other media was already perceptible and useful to these pioneers of the camera.

Being almost completely dependent on an already existing external universe, the photographer could observe, and, with limitations, organize, what to him were its salient features; but the job of recreating and developing them plasticly had to be left to the painter and sculptor. The trail which was blazed by Stieglitz and Atget had, therefore, to be paved by others. But it was already apparent that the printed word which was making important physical changes in the contemporary landscape was destined to contribute heavily towards revolutionizing contemporary art.

Picasso, I think, saw the experimental, aesthetic implications of this far more profoundly than any other living artist. He seems to have been thoroughly familiar with the organic construction of written language and the part it played in the arts of the past, and by reason of this knowledge was better

able to understand and utilize what was taking place around him. You may legitimately complain that Picasso is not concerned with the emotional pulse-beat of the human race, that in this respect his art is less socially significant than Courbet's, Daumier's, or even Cézanne's—for Cézanne's sensibility to human emotions also had distinct limitations—yet you must, at the same time, admit that



REMBRANDT: Saskia in Bed, with a Child (Wash Drawing) c.1654. Collection Paul J. Sachs

Picasso is an enormously sensitive artist who, by the inventive fertility of his work and the strength of his personality, has assumed a pivotal position in the arts of our time. Certainly he set some of the waves in motion from which Marinetti later announced the precepts of Futurism. Dadaism, and Surrealism—that wanton child of the subconscious—might also have taken very different forms if Picasso hadn't investigated the creative potentialities of written language.

II

By turning for a moment to a consideration of the character and development of written language, we shall be better able to understand the contribution of calligraphy to the arts of our age as well as to those of all ages.

Although written languages fall into several general categories, depending on the complexity of the ideas they seek to convey, all of them stem from a single pictorial source—nature's forms, or man's. To people who for centuries have been using alphabetic, printed word-signs which no longer retain any recog-

(Below, left) MINIATURE FROM THE EBBO GOSPELS, Rheims School, Ninth Century. (Below, right) DETAIL FROM GREEK AMPHORA, Eighth Century B.C. Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City



nizable vestige of the original natural forms after which they were patterned, this may seem incredible. But it is nevertheless true that forms such as a house, a musical instrument, water, an ox, a hand, a face, were the original elements from which our letters evolved. The Hebrew language is, to my knowledge, the only alphabetic one which still retains something of the character of the objects from which the letters of the Hebrew alphabet received their names. The first letter in the Hebrew alphabet is Aleph, meaning ox; and the written character for the letter, a stylized abstraction of the head of an ox with crossed horns, can still be detected in the present form of the printed letter. This is similarly true, though to a smaller extent, of the Chinese, which is not an alphabetic language but a collection of more than fifty thousand individual glyphs or characters, that over the course of several millennia have become

increasingly abstract and stenographic. But many of the root forms are still recognizable.

There is a point in the development of every language—and there are many that have never gone beyond this point—at which the calligraphy of language and that of art are indistinguishable. This usually occurs where the character of the language is either pictorial, as in the pictographs of the American Indian, the Egyptian hieroglyphs, and the more condensed hieroglyphs of the Mayans—or non-pictorial, such as Chinese, Persian, Arabic, and Indian, and used for their decorative value. In both cases, the creative problem involved in forming plastic or graphic synonyms for physical objects and ideas associated with them, or in the purely decorative use of script, is comparable, though on a reduced scale, to any other creative problem. It seems to me that the elements of creative construction, no matter what medium you may be working in, only vary in degree but not in kind. Written language contains all these elements in embryo. This can be illustrated by a very simple example. The Egyptian glyph for water consists of three, short, zig-zag lines drawn horizontally one beneath another. The ancient Chinese sign for pouring water is composed of several undulating lines placed side by side. The American Indian represented water by the same means, and rain by an arch for the ceiling of the sky, with agitated lines descending from it.

Is the solution of this rather elementary problem so very different from the way our



EL GRECO: The Agony in the Garden (Painting).
National Gallery, London



CEZANNE: Mt. St. Victoire (Painting) c.1885.
Courtesy Phillips Memorial Gallery



JOHN MARIN: Broadway (Water Color) 1929.
Courtesy An American Place



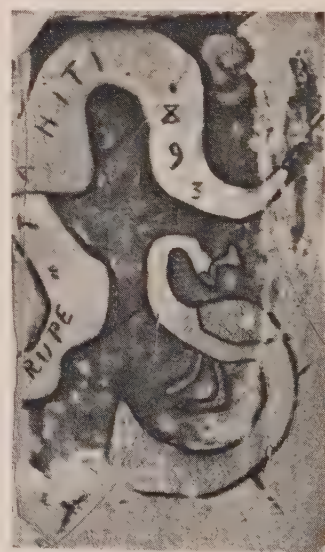
(Left) WU CHEN: Bamboo in the Wind, Chinese, Yuan Dynasty (1271-1367). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (Above) Page of a JAINA MANUSCRIPT (Detail): Gujarat, India, Fifteenth Century. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

best artists have always attempted to solve their more complex problems? The reduction of physical forces and the sensations they produce on the artist to their simplest and, at the same time, richest plastic denominators: this is a fundamental principle of all creative construction. Economy is a law of art just as it is of nature. And our aesthetic gratification is largely dependent on this factor. The Dakota Indian, who recorded the important events which formed the collective experience of his people from one winter to the next, was, within the limits of his understanding, obeying the letter of this law as rigidly as Marin or Cézanne, Rembrandt, or Tintoretto. There is a point, however, beyond which intuition cannot possibly go, and where only those whose intuitions have been refined into controlled knowledge are free to travel. It is at this point that the Dakota scribe lost the trail and men like Marin picked it up. This, however, should not prevent us from recognizing the fundamental similarity of their creative procedure.

What we often call calligraphic, therefore, in the work of an artist, is the perceptible effort toward condensation which he exerts over his materials. Frequently, as in Cézanne and to a smaller degree in El Greco and Tintoretto, where the human and structural relationships are particularly complex, this is not

easy to identify. It is there, nevertheless, and you can see it in the economy and certainty with which each brush-stroke is related to the next and to the objects which they articulate. But this condensation may take any number of forms, and there are a thousand different avenues of approach. It is as visible in the hieratic sculpture "Idol" of Lipchitz as it is in the Mayan glyphs, the episodic, neo-hieroglyphic painting of Torres-Garcia, or the West Indian petroglyph.

In a less problematic form we recognize it in the wash-drawing, "Bamboo in the Wind,"



GAUGUIN: Decorative Panel (Oil on Glass) 1893. Private Collection. Courtesy Museum of Modern Art



(Above) PAGE OF A KORAN, Arabic in Kufic Script.
Eighth-Ninth Century. Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
(Right) TSCHI BAI-SHI: Lobsters, Contemporary Chinese



by Wu Chen and in the work of Tschi Bai-Shi, a Chinese contemporary who, if still alive (he was, two years ago), has passed his seventy-fifth year. It is worth noting that in the work of both these men—separated in time by more than half a millennium—there has been hardly any separation between the forms of their language and the forms of their art. These have a single, indivisible character. The Chinese, like the Persians and other Far Eastern peoples, have always regarded their written language as being as potentially artistic as what we would call their art. From the point of view of the Occidental, the type of art exemplified by the work of Wu Chen and Tschi Bai-Shi, though delightful, does not seem particularly significant. He is inclined to feel that statements as bare as theirs must inevitably lack the architectonic values of Western art. Yet

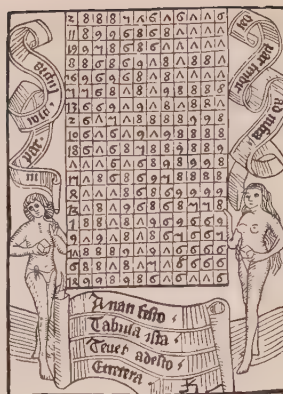
one is obliged to admit that the decorative uses to which the Chinese, the Persians, and other contiguous races have put their script have never been surpassed for their intrinsic beauty of line, nor for the superlative craftsmanship with which they have been applied to glassware, tiles, and architectural façades. In the Western world, where the continuity of written language had been fractured by the introduction of movable types and the printing press, it was only natural that an entirely different development should have resulted. This was not felt immediately. The tradition of manuscript illustration and illumination persisted until the close of the fifteenth century. Language then began to take on an increasingly static appearance. Not being pictorial in the first place, and no longer free to be both decorative and readable, it had to be augmented by illustrations to enliven the printed page. In the Gothic block print of the fifteenth century, we still get an artistic unity of written language and illustration. With the wider dispersion of printed matter, language became more and more a thing to be read for its verbal content than for its visual beauty. This degeneration of language as an art continued uninterrupted until the beginning of the nineteenth century when it met the resistance of William Blake, who, in his engravings, gave the written and printed



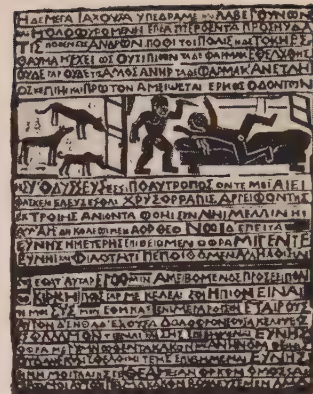
PERSIAN WALL TILE;
Blue Relief In-
scription; Paint-
ing in Copper
Lustre, c.1300.
Courtesy Metro-
politan Museum
of Art



BENJAMIN KOPMAN:
Drawing, c.1925



CALENDAR WOODCUT,
German, c.1470



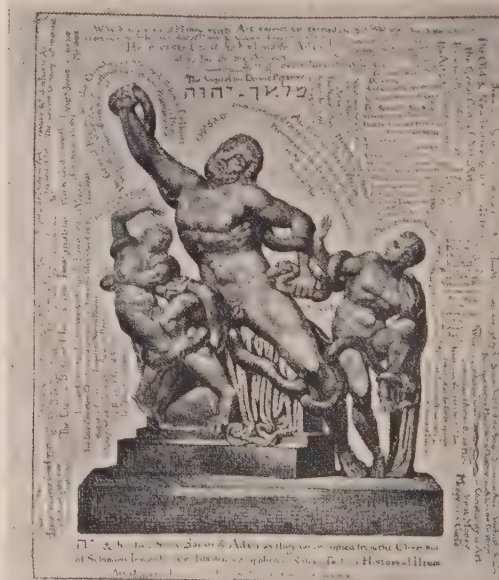
G. H. WOLFF: Odysseus and
Circe (Woodcut) 1922



MARINETTI: *Les Mots en liberté*, 1919

word a new lease on life. It became as personal as his art, suggesting by his letter forms both his mood and thought. Nor was he blind to its decorative use in relation to illustration or by itself. In his rebellious hands, language became a living thing. He did for it in the nineteenth century what others were to do for it in the twentieth.

Picasso, as I suggested earlier in the article, should be credited with having been one of the first of his age to experiment with printed language as an element of picture design. In his work he used it abstractly, without regard for its verbal meaning. He was interested in words for their formal rather than their human value. He saw that the printed word belonged on a canvas just as any other object; that it had a ready-made completeness of form not easily improved upon; and that the alphabet was a nursery of basic forms.



WILLIAM BLAKE: Laocoön (Engraving).
Courtesy Fogg Art Museum

In many ways, Marinetti, the oracle of Futurism (which in Italy has become an artistic counterpart of Fascism), went further than Picasso in juggling the printed word, not on canvas, but for its own sweet self. He made type faces speak the language of his thoughts and feelings by using them as free compositional units. Although this was probably done in the spirit of play, it was nevertheless an important achievement; for it helped to liberate printed language from the cold, characterless walls of type behind which it had languished for several centuries. Although I have no means of confirming it, I neverthe-



JACQUES MAUNY: New York (Painting) 1925.
 Gallery of Living Art, New York University



(Left)
 ALFRED STIEGLITZ:
 Five Points, New York, 1892.
 Courtesy An American Place

(Below)
 PICASSO: Blue Store
 Front (Painting) 1913

less feel quite sure that Marinetti's experiments must have had considerable influence on the development of typography, on the film, and on the Dadaists and Surrealists.*

Germany with its long tradition of wood-cutting has never lost its feeling for the decorative character of language. In 1906 or

*After this article had been written it occurred to me that I had neglected to mention the important, experimental work with type faces and script of Guillaume Apollinaire, and, in 1915, of Marius De Zayas and Picabia who helped produce those extraordinary printed broadsides which were issued by Alfred Stieglitz's former "291" gallery. A complete set of these broadsides, bearing the collective title of "291," can be seen in the print room of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. E.M.B.

(Continued on page 384)





Courtesy Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery

ARNOLD BLANCH: THE THIRD MORTGAGE

ARNOLD BLANCH

By ERNEST BRACE

A LOVELY picture is not enough. The painter who is aware of the life outside his studio window must add a comment, a philosophical attitude, at least, to the color and composition and form which have in recent years exclusively bounded the purposes of painting. Arnold Blanch has reached this belief both intellectually and as an almost inevitable result of his early tendencies. For, even in the days when "literary quality" was a more scathing criticism than bad drawing, there was in much of his work a predominating interest in the manifestations of animate life. And today he seems to have bid a definite farewell to the still-life school of painting with its finely spun theories of abstract aesthetics. Such theories are a basis, a beginning, but there must be something more. "A painter," he feels, "should not only create art, but use art in order to create."

Intensely interested in the world in which he lives and disagreeing violently and flatly with ready-made ideas and opinions, Arnold Blanch is driven by his intellectual restlessness

now to earnest faith, and now to brooding despair. He is far too skeptical of ideas usually taken for granted to rest serenely in that mauve world where the word "art" is holy. In his more despondent moods he is all but ready to agree with the Spenglerian theory that "of great painting there can no longer be, for Western people, any question." And yet he knows that to himself painting is vitally important, not only as a means of expression but also as a source of deep satisfaction. His restlessness urges him on to seek some way through which it can be made important to others, for only with some faith in its potency can he justify his own belief. He does not blame the world for ignoring or despising art. He feels rather that the fault lies with painters who "in their frantic endeavor for self-expression have lost the art of being understood."

Partly because of his need to establish some basis of understanding, Blanch has, within the past few years, turned avowedly to the painting of pictures inspired by some idea or



Courtesy Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery

ARNOLD BLANCH: LITTLE GIRL



Courtesy Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery

ARNOLD BLANCH: LEGACY

some philosophical statement. And in this approach to his work he has found fresh, exciting impetus. "I can go much further with a canvas now," he says. "The longer I work, the more possibilities open up. The canvas grows increasingly interesting as I paint on it, and, when you just look around for a pleasant landscape or an attractive still life to paint, that never happens." Actually it seems to me that a study of Arnold Blanch's painting proves this method to be a natural conclusion, a process of self-discovery, rather than a change. "The Fire," painted seven years ago and showing the burning of a group of barns, amateur fire brigades, and the movements of excited, frightened people animating the picture, proved Blanch to be interested in something more than well-designed canvases. Even the least populated of his earlier landscapes had more drama inherent in them, more human comment than most pictures of the sort. They often showed brooding aspects of nature: rugged, bleak hills; a black, dead tree, somberly, impressively beautiful; a lone

hunter and his dog resting by a stone wall in a snow-patched, frozen countryside. His nudes and his portraits seemed somehow to be more earthy, more aware of life as growth than those of most of his contemporaries. Many of them were lovely pictures, but they were never genial, never attempts to put art in its own ideal or mathematical world.

And a canvas he has recently completed, "The Farmer," seems to me to clarify and to emphasize the nebulous ideas and emotions that have unconsciously motivated much of his best painting in the past. In a vast, flat landscape, a gaunt farmer kneels and, with one arm shakingly uplifted, beseeches rain. Clad in blue overalls and with arms bare, he is an amazingly vital figure. The whole movement of his body and arms and back-tilted head is at once authentic and stirring. Behind him the golden-brown landscape stretches to tiny, distant houses and meets the relentlessly blue sky. Whether one would argue over the subject-matter or not, there can be no denying that the canvas is masterfully

painted and that the artist has not only intensely felt his subject but has realized it fully and impressively. There is tense excitement in the picture as there must have been equally tense excitement in the painter while he worked on it.

"The Farmer" is a fitting and stirring climax to his recent work. Beginning with "New England,"* a sombre, rather bitter statement, showing a stripped, abandoned Ford and a scarecrow dominating a stark landscape, and continuing with "Red House," which strangely combines the symbols of poverty

* Reproduced in *The American Magazine of ART*, October, 1934, page 548.

with both the richness and the bleakness of the earth, he has in "The Farmer" intensified and made more keenly tragic the broad idea underlying them all. One feels a renewed vitality in his work, and a skill which amply fulfills his earlier promise.

Neither in living nor in painting has Blanch ever reached the pleasant somnolence of problems solved and questions answered. Temperamentally, he disagrees. He disagreed with millions of his countrymen in 1917. He disagreed with his father and became a painter, and, at one time or another, he has disagreed with most of his contemporaries on the subject of painting. He attended art school first in



ARNOLD
BLANCH:
THE
HUNTER

Courtesy
Frank K. M.
Rehn Gallery

Minneapolis and later at the Art Students' League in New York, where, like many of his generation, he was deeply influenced by the teaching of Kenneth Hayes Miller. For a while he did commercial work, and then, after a trip abroad, he went to Woodstock. There, for the past dozen years, he and his wife, Lucille Blanch, have lived and painted. Except for ventures such as running a restaurant and weaving, they have managed to exist by their painting, a feat difficult enough to discourage most artists from even attempting it.

A love of rural, almost pioneer life is apparent in much of Blanch's work. He likes to hunt and to fish, and the miles of wooded mountains around Woodstock are as familiar to him as to a native. During the lean years fish and game have provided most of his meat. But many of his finer canvases show that more than the instinct to hunt or the necessity to provide food drives him out into the hills or up the streams. Behind the painting of most pictures there is a more or less definite feeling of nostalgia—for loveliness that fades, for a golden age, for the complete faith of saints and martyrs, for some dreamed-of past perfection. And in Blanch's landscapes there lurks often a nostalgia for the heroic past of our own country. His hunting and fishing take him back into this past—give him the sense of vigor and of solitude that are typical of it. And from these excursions come brooding, often lonely pictures, imbued with a spirit of tragedy. They are rugged and vitally real, yet strangely softened by a poignant feeling of nostalgia.

Were Blanch less aware of the distressed, frantic world around him, this nostalgic sense would perhaps melt out into romantic pining and the painting of day-dreamed scenes, but he is quite aware that whatever virtue there may have been in the past is entirely spiritual and that one may never recapture it by duplicating its forms. The savagery that flames up in such pictures as "New England" and "The Farmer" is the result of his conflict between past and present. The scarecrow, the dilapidated Ford, the tense, praying figure in blue overalls are symbols of the endless struggle between man's aspirations and his destiny. The promise, both practical and spiritual, of

early New England has come to rags and desolation. The statement is neither satirical nor entirely bitter; it is too serious, too earnestly tense for that. And the farmer is in no way a beaten or a whining figure. There is something exhilaratingly heroic about him, an energy that quite transcends the barrenness in which he kneels.

All of Blanch's figure paintings have the same sturdy reality that is characteristic of his landscapes. The portrait of a little girl painted a few years ago is neither cute nor winsome. She is a very genuine little girl, looking rather shy and rather fragile, and she is obviously a little girl who will grow up and become a woman; not, as is so often true of portraits of children, a doll-like creature whose growth would be something of a shock! His figure pictures have characteristically this quality of earthy existence. There is something solid, something ponderably real about them. They are a part of nature, having in them the properties of growth and of actuality, as opposed to a skillful impression of character or mood.

But if a lovely picture is not enough, neither, he feels, is a real one. There must be thought behind it, an idea, an affirmation of some sort. If such pictures as "Man's Best Friend" were bad pictures, it was not because they had so-called literary quality but because they were bad pictures and the ideas they set forth were cheap. In the effort to avoid sentimentality and banality, many painters and writers of the past decade achieved only sterility. Blanch sees no reason why painting should limit itself to technical problems, nor why a painter should go on painting if he must limit his work to such problems and his audience to the professional patrons of art.

Paradoxically enough, it is precisely because of Blanch's interest in things as they are and in ideas growing out of them that he is driven away from the practical world toward the ivory tower he despises. His pictures are not genial, gay bits of color that make a nice decoration for a wall. The busy world that he watches and discusses endlessly wants pictures of the old mill stream, or, the part of it that is more prosperous and sophisticated, something a bit modernistic for the



Courtesy Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery

ARNOLD BLANCH: THE FARMER

boudoir or over the fireplace. The farmer praying for rain feels that the calendar the local garage sends out for Christmas is as pretty a picture as anybody would want to look at. How, then, is painting to achieve the vitality a closer contact with life and people could give it? Blanch does not demand that he shall have unlimited freedom to paint what he pleases, and he insists that he would accept the most exacting commission, with only the limitation that he paint in his own way and give the picture the reality he sees. This need of closer contact with the practical world is driving many of his contemporaries to an alliance with some form of political and social faith. Art as propaganda is better than art as nothing more than art. But though Blanch is as interested in social and economic problems as he is in hunting and fishing, his intellectual restlessness will not give his ardor time to jell into any form of social religion. He is certain only that in some way he must ally his painting with the contemporary world of events and people. Painting for him cannot exist in the vacuum of art for art's sake.

Perhaps his unwillingness to accommodate himself to the ornamental and often freakish position of the artist in contemporary society is a heritage from his mid-Western youth where a man was judged by his practical accomplishments and his bank account. Certainly, there is in both his work and his outlook a distinctly American flavor. His three trips abroad, one of which was on a Guggenheim fellowship, and even his sometimes patent admiration for Corot have left him less European than many who self-consciously battle against French or Italian tradition. His essential Americanism is the result of no theory. It is rather the result of his deep familiarity with, and a keen interest in, the life and growth of his native land. And, sensing much loveliness in even its harsher aspects, he has come to realize that the question of beauty and ugliness is not as superficially simple as it is popularly supposed to be. It is not merely a choice between, say, the Parthenon and Gopher Prairie's general store. In art, beauty is never a question of reproducing something that is in itself perfect; it is an interpretation of the forms of living.



Courtesy Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery

ARNOLD BLANCH: MINE FIRE

Pictures of sunsets, of rainbows, of Greek temples are invariably dull because the mind that expects to find beauty ready-made is too weary, too superficial to seek deeper and more satisfying significances and forms in the commonplace or even in the apparently ugly. It is invariably the mark of the second-rate artist, in any of the arts, that he refuses to treat anything but the pleasant. Blanch's paintings are American, not only in subject-matter but in their deep understanding of the meaning and the flavor of things American, whether it happens to be a lovely countryside or a broken-down Ford.

Technically, Blanch is a master of his craft. His drawings and his lithographs evidence his skill, and in his paintings the color has taken on a warmth and a glowing richness that was sometimes lacking in his earlier work. Broadly speaking, his technical problems have been solved, and now he must find others, for he is unwilling to repeat an old formula or play endless variations on a single theme. He must find some use for his technique, for to him it must always be a means and not an end. If a choice must be made, life is more

important than art. In speaking of his painting he has said: "Any perceptible developments in my work have been preceded always by a greater susceptibility to the life about me, which in turn was caused perhaps by throwing off an old prejudice and a realization that experience is never-ending."

Those for whom pictures are a visual day-dream, scenes of bodiless, effortless meandering, will find too much and too insistent reality in the painting of Arnold Blanch. He himself refuses to use his art as an escape, nor will he help you to escape. But those who can comprehend a deeper and a more vivifying satisfaction in the infinite aspects of man and nature as living, growing, and dying, will find significant loveliness in his work. He has a breadth of vision and a mastery of his craft that make him outstanding among his contemporaries. And, if neither a lovely nor a real picture is enough, he has the intelligence and the comprehension to carry him beyond the complacency of rigid theories and the preconceptions of tired minds. The best of Arnold Blanch's painting is inspiringly beautiful.

THE INNOCENT BYSTANDER

By FORBES WATSON

ONE of my readers has sent me a complaint that betrays his lower nature since his words are not in the least kindly. He writes me that he has heard that the *Innocent Bystander* is going to take a summer vacation and will not appear, after the June issue of this magazine, until it is good riding weather again in Virginia. From which one gathers that he is a Virginian. The accusation against me is that despite my Washington affiliations, I seem to be unaware of the changing art situation in the Capital of the U.S.A. Casting aside my review of the Corcoran Biennial and my articles on the PWAP and the Section of Painting and Sculpture, he sinks to the depths of malignancy and flatly accuses me of being a provincial New Yorker who sees nothing outside of New York.

These are somewhat harsh words to use against a reviewer who wrote about Iowa and other regional centers before the now famous artists of Cedar Rapids, Fort Dodge, Stone City, and other points along the corn belt, had even won a prize in a state fair; before the Art Institute of Chicago had ever heard of those self-appointed and slightly tardy leaders of regionalism, those men who are now treating that potentially healthy movement as if it were a kind of partisan redeemer concerned with them and them alone; before some of the most clamorous regionalists knew their way to East Fifty-seventh Street.

Possibly the specious claims that the only hope for American art is for it to be corn-fed (specious in the light of Homer, Eakins, Bellows, and other proponents of the home-land scene as subject matter befitting an artist's observation) may have turned back more than one reviewer from his formerly optimistic hopes that the redemption of American art depended on an escape from cosmopolitanism and internationalism into nationalism. In this new movement the painters were far behind the reviewers, in point of time. But let's not be irritating. If the reviewers, slightly

repelled by the profane ballyhoo of the localists, turn too quickly away from a belief in the saving graces of the provincial, their delinquency can easily be corrected.

Such recalcitrants are perhaps affected by the fact that few members of the current crop of localists have put to shame the vitality of such definitely American painters as those already mentioned: Homer, Eakins, and Bellows. The retroactive reviewers may even believe that the boasting corn-feeders would have more vitality to put into their painting if they put less vitality into advertising themselves. Homer, in Maine, must have eaten a good deal of codfish and Eakins in Philadelphia, was certainly not out of reach of the oysters of Chesapeake Bay. I should say that the cod-fed and the oyster-fed rather have it on the corn-fed as to painting vitality.

But then Eakins and Homer were so interested in painting that they did not have much time to spare to give out blasts of publicity. Their contemporary, Whistler, wasted much time on self-advertising, which may, in part, account for his weaker painting vitality. George Bellows might have come nearer to the full realization of his gifts if he had given less time to advertising his wares. Evidently both the contemporary and the earlier records indicate that in the end the publicity hounds both devitalize and falsify their output.

Whatever the records show, I shall take a hint from my antipathetic critic and devote my last *Innocent Bystander* of the season exclusively to Washington, D. C. A fortunate decision—since at the moment Washington, D. C., is a seething cauldron of art, or at least of activities creditably reported to be allied to art. The American Federation of Arts is assembling its cohorts in Washington at the very moment when this copy is wending its way through the editorial office and the composing room into the impatient presses. As the Federation brings its activities to a climax with a splendid feast, the College Art Association will join hands with the Federation at the same banquet table, only to continue the

next day its own four-day session, which will conclude with the combined festivities on the Potomac of the College Art Association and the American Association of Museums.

But Washington was very much awake before these spring festivities began. Mrs. Eugene Meyer, Jr., whom once we thought of as author of *Li Lung-mien*, friend of the Freer Gallery, admirer of Picasso, client of Despiou, collector of Cézanne, has sponsored an independent exhibition which, divided into nine parts, has been doing its best to hypnotize the visitors to nine different department stores. New York has had its various Wanamaker, Macy, Lord and Taylor, Altman and Hearn department store exhibitions. But when did it ever run a nine-ringed independent circus? A distinguished committee, consisting of Duncan Phillips, Olin Dows, and others, assisted Mrs. Meyer in carrying out her genuinely democratic undertaking, and the power of her husband's newspaper ably aided and abetted the nine department stores in moving the local independent artists into a place in the sun. A series of purchase prizes was given and Ernest Lawson, as a one-man prize-awarding jury, selected so well that, since juries will probably continue to afflict the world, we can't help hoping that in future they will be limited to a one-man membership.

Nine synchronizing independent shows and the descent upon Washington of various national societies devoted to the welfare of the arts, by no means exhausted Washington's present passion for art. Most heterogeneous groups of artists have been coming to town to present their views at the hearings of the House of Representatives Committee on Patents—or writing their opinions and sending them to the Committee, because once more the bright thought has come to a number of people that the salvation of the U. S. A. depends upon our having a "Department of Science, Art and Literature" with a Cabinet member at its head, and expert undersecretaries commanding the separate divisions of the proposed Department.

These amazing hearings run the gamut of human emotions (if we include also the appendix of their printed report), a gamut that extends from the doggerel of state poet lau-

reates to the definitely constructive suggestions of such experts in their field as Admiral C. J. Peoples, Louis Simon, and Edward Bruce; from the high-flown pathos of Gutzon Borglum about the fate of the lone genius if he be not nursed and suckled by a Ministry of Fine Arts to such tart communications as the short note from George P. Baxter of Harvard University, who, after saying three times "no," concludes, "It seems to me an unfortunate time to raise the question."

While these more or less helter-skelter hearings were proceeding "on the hill" in the new House Office Building, a very acid and definitely planned proceeding went forward in the new Internal Revenue palace. To this proceeding came Lord Duveen of Millbank in debonair mood as a witness for the defense in the tax case against Andrew Mellon. From it he departed somewhat subdued after a cross-examination which brought forth documents which I think are certainly not among the items of Joseph James Duveen's favorite reading. His Lordship made so many astounding statements about the trade of art dealing (he insisted it was a trade), about his rather splendid disregard of whether in one year he lost a couple of millions or made them—he really wasn't interested in figures—and about the psychology of his small but very rich clientele that Washington is still gasping.

But this was not all that Washington did. The new Supreme Court Building was opened to the capital's spring avalanche of tourists. This astounding white marble extravaganza, wedding-cake tomb of a dead period and glaring morgue of wasted millions, sent thousands of tourists back to the old home gaping and wondering. Its opening to the tourists, coming at approximately the same time as the visit of Andrew Mellon, flanked with a small army of lawyers, law clerks, and private secretaries, and Lord Duveen in very, very English mood, called back a not too distant era that already seems more vaudeville than actual.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 220

Hearings of great importance to artists are now going forward before the House of Rep-

representatives Committee on Patents, over House Joint Resolution 220, Seventy-fourth Congress, 1st Session, a resolution to establish an *executive* department to be known as "The Department of Science, Art and Literature." Organized academicians have spasmodically fought for such a department, while unorganized independents have almost unanimously fought against it. What the Government has done for the artists, in their hour of need, through the agency of the PWAP and what it is doing today through the Section of Painting and Sculpture, Procurement Division, Treasury Department, has proved to many artists that it is possible for a government to employ artists without being swayed by either political or aesthetic prejudice.

These two agencies have won over a large number of independent artists to the government. But between a permanent government department, which includes provable science and unprovable art, not to mention literature—a department which includes so much in fact that no single human being could possibly grasp its scope—and a section devoted to clearly stated purposes, there is a vast difference. The proposed department would change its head with every administration. It would be in an analogous position with a great university's research department which changed all its professors and experimenters every time a new president was elected. It would be constantly changing its horses in midstream. Or, if it should drop the idea of having a cabinet member at its head, how could the country be assured that it would be directed by an appointee who arrived at his high position without the testing of a single political wire?

There are men like Admiral C. J. Peoples, Director of Procurement, Louis Simon, Supervising Architect of the Treasury, and Edward Bruce, Consulting Expert of the Section of Painting and Sculpture, who have more first-hand knowledge of what the government can do for our painters, sculptors, and architects than most other men. They have declared their desire to help the artist. They have worked for him and so far as I can analyse their testimony before the Committee

on Patents, I believe they favor an *advisory* rather than an *operative* department. It would help the artist in every field to receive governmental recognition, just as it has helped him in France. It would injure the artist—with France again the precedent—to be the subject of political chicanery. The most important factor in the whole proposition is to guard against the little tricks and travesties which, according to all good authorities in France, the French Ministry has so often played on its artists and its museums. This work requires, on the part of those who undertake it, great cultivation and sophistication. While asking all our readers to write their views on this paramount issue, I shall quote, from the Committee's report, passages which seem to indicate that, in drawing up the resolution, neither the most educated nor the most serious members of the House are greatly involved.

If, after reading the quotations from the Resolution given below, every artist does not do a little "writing to the editor," he must never complain if we have a department or ministry of fine arts as painful to free-thinking artists as the French ministry. Read first, artists, this from the Resolution:

"Whereas, radio has become the handmaiden in modern days of the muse of music, speeding her harmonies and melodies through the air to many millions of American homes; and

"Whereas the limitations of the olden stage have been removed by the motion pictures, accompanied by sonancy, and the genius of dramatic authors and writers is no longer pent up in the Utica of confinement to small stages and auditoriums but ranges the United States so that the lesser villages may now receive the same presentations as the major cities, and instead of fustian and buckram the backgrounds of film dramas [always remembering 'sonancy'] are as realistic as if, as in many cases they are, they were the actual scenes of the words and actions of the plays shown on the film . . ."

Facts wrapped up in tripe are dangerous. As artists something should be done about it. *Write to your editor.*

Lord Duveen of Millbank arrived in Washington the other day and testified for Andrew Mellon before the U. S. Board of Tax Appeals. Needless to say the petitioner and the Commissioner of Internal Revenue were at odds. Mr. Mellon, you may remember, bought sundry pictures from the Hermitage in Russia with money which he forwarded to Knoedler and Company. For some reason he called Joseph James Duveen as a witness to show that his purchases were practically infinitely valuable. The idea of course was that the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust was being given pictures of such fabulous value that the United States ought to be ashamed of itself for asking Andrew Mellon to pay taxes.

But the United States has an idea that Mr. Mellon's trust is a kind of shell and pea game, which simply goes to show how suspicious the United States is growing up to be. Lord Duveen of Millbank, on the other hand, has no idea that a great country like ours—he is an alien resident I gather—is getting suspicious. To be sure the Government lawyer rather successfully defeated Duveen's very English accent when he pursued his simplified remarks on cross-examination with "Do you understand?" "Do you follow me?"

Duveen put on a great act. He became stupid or keen as quickly as a cat, according to the demand of the testimony. He only made one crucial mistake. His clever lawyer evidently advised him badly. His lordship tried to establish the point that he "really wasn't interested in figures" (meaning monetary figures). He did his comics beautifully and the Government lawyer, Mr. R. H. Jackson, had to wait several times for a laughing audience because Duveen more than once stated that he really did not know what he lost or made. Mr. Jackson evidently had some goal to reach. Every now and then he interrupted himself to ask Duveen if he wanted the Board to understand that he, Duveen, could not remember whether he made \$2,000,000 or lost \$900,000. Joseph James said he didn't know; he wasn't interested in figures. The press and

the audience smiled. The very old-fashioned attitude of Duveen intrigued them. His "my man" (referring to the vice-president of his company), and his conjecture that probably no one in the world was more enthusiastic than he over a really great work of art, were expressed in an inimitable manner which brought forth twinkles in the eyes of the reporters.

But Mr. Jackson was not asleep. Speaking of the "Praying Pilgrim" by Rembrandt he assured the witness that "Praying" was spelled with an "a." And hours after he had heard the audience chuckle many times at Duveen's well-voiced quips, he brought forward some papers one of which was the famous old indictment against His Lordship as an individual member of a firm which had been obliged to pay the U. S. A. \$1,180,000 penalties and \$10,000 fines. I do not remember a quip from Duveen after this disagreeable action on the part of the Government's attorney.

Mr. Mellon paid over \$6,000,000 for the paintings under dispute. The issue is whether he intends to make a gift. As to their quality all agree with Duveen. Yet I imagine His Lordship regretted being a witness. But this is mere surmise.

A JUDGE JUDGES JUSTLY

My guide could not tell me the names of the architects and sculptors who sat down to the great white marble feast that is now the new Supreme Court of the United States. He told me that the front doors weighed thirteen tons and that the whole temple cost ten million dollars. He could give no names of its makers. I tried to guess and concluded that a troupe of visiting Romans must have gone on a marble spree and this was the result. Certainly it has no connection with America.

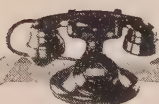
The inside also is a boomday dream of heavy expensiveness and the holy of holies is fantastically proportioned. To quote the witty member of the Supreme Court who originated the devastating witticism:

"In this room the justices of the Court will look like black waterbugs in the Temple of Karnak."



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NEW BOOKS ON ART

The Spirit of Man in Asian Art

By Laurence Binyon. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, Publishers. Price, \$4.00.

LIBRARIANS, to whom the classification of a steady stream of books must be more a duty than a pleasure, have doubtless pigeon-holed Mr. Binyon's latest volume as a general survey of oriental art. There is little else they could do, yet *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* is actually more particular than general, is selective without being narrow. It has the qualities of perception and understanding which can spring only from broad scholarship. That it never leans upon the clichés of conventional academicism is all the more to Mr. Binyon's credit. He explains at the outset that he will not "approach the subject from an archaeological or historical or technical point of view. Rather [he writes] I wish to show, if I can, . . . how the spirit of man, whether in China or India, in Persia or Japan, has expressed through creative art its relation to the world and to the universe; to suggest the likenesses and contrasts between these and the arts of the Western countries, the reactions of the arts of the various races of Asia on each other, and the specific virtue in the contribution of each of them to the whole. . . ." In the six lectures,* slightly revised for publication, Mr. Binyon fulfills these promises.

Since this review can in no real sense be a resumé, the most that it can do is to indicate in its allotted space a few of the ideas which it holds or suggests. Even the unlearned reader will find suggested by the plates contrasts and likenesses unmentioned by Mr. Binyon. Remembering the flat convention of Indian painting he will be surprised to see how plastic is the wall painting in the Bagh caves (Plate 8). He will see here formal similarities with Western murals already familiar. For another paradoxical sameness he might compare the "Stone Torso of an Indian Prince" of the Gupta Period (Plate 10) with the bronze

Dauids of Verocchio and Donatello. But he should not forget that the complete statue would probably have obscured the similarity. Mr. Binyon compares the torso with a Chinese "Stone Bodhisattva" of the T'ang Dynasty (Plate 11) to show how the latter was influenced by the "greatest art that India had produced." But he shows at the same time that this was no shallow imitation, but rather the result of a "fructifying contact."

Just as the Chinese figure stands alone and, unlike the typical stone sculptures of India, is not part of a seething design, Chinese painting takes a wholly different attitude toward space. Westerners could have no better introduction to the ideas behind this attitude than the lecture, "The Conception of Landscape Art in China." Even the first recognition of this distant tradition can give new depth of meaning to our visual experience. The uses of space and "emptiness" have never been so fully realized in the West. We have borrowed other things from the East; Japanese buildings and gardens have given us valuable lessons which already have begun to lose their strangeness. In time Chinese space-concepts may give us a new impetus and a fresh orientation.

When we discover that "empty spaces are as beautiful as the forms they enclose," we shall be on the way. As a race we take pride in defeating space with our machines. The Western temperament, in its desire to possess the world, strives to circle it. The Chinese simply sits and lets the universe come round him. To him space is mind—to the Westerner it is matter. Perhaps our physicists will finally convince us that space is both.

Whether they will or not is, of course, not a concern of Mr. Binyon's book. Nor are its pages solely devoted to such considerations as those I have so briefly indicated. Mr. Binyon writes as keenly on the arts of the Persians and of the Japanese, of the ideas from which they sprang, and of the popular arts of Japan and India. Along the way he makes searching observations on the nature of all art. These are not based solely on his

* The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures delivered in Harvard University, 1933-34.

knowledge of the East; his passages contrasting Western painting and Western ideas with those of Asia show him to be fairer than many an oriental specialist to the monuments of the European tradition. It may be partly because he is more at home in it than many of his confrères, being himself an accomplished poet, and an authority on English water color painting.

However that may be, his book is fair, and its fairness is based on assurance. He seems not to be beset by those fears of scholarship which anticipate the attacks of rivals in the same field. And prose like Mr. Binyon's is not written by every comparable scholar—or by every comparable poet. Certainly few authorities, even when writing a book of this kind of which it is not a function to be too stringent about dates and attributions, could manage to be so gentle in suggesting that the attributions of others may be a little optimistic. This again is a sign of assurance. No quality is more magnetic and enlivening in a book; and very few are rarer.

F. A. WHITING, JR.

Philip Webb

By W. R. Lethaby. Oxford University Press, Publishers, 1935. Price, \$2.50.

THE low estate of the architectural profession provokes the thought that perhaps the principle reason why the late Professor Lethaby's book on Philip Webb should be read is that it sets forth clearly and in detail those forces in modern life the best architects must battle, and tells the story of how one of them lived in the closing years of the last century. Philip Webb was the architect-member of William Morris and Company, that association of gifted artists which included Madox Brown and Rossetti, Morris, Webb, Bourne-Jones, Faulkner, and P. P. Marshall. Of the work of this group, which formed the spearhead of the arts and crafts movement in England, Lethaby writes sympathetically, and from his rich storehouse of recollections fills many gaps in our present knowledge of the movement and the period. Webb's architectural work was small in volume, but highly influential; his most important buildings were country houses. But Professor Lethaby is

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clearly right when he says that Webb's work in the ornamental arts, wide-ranging and impressive, is probably of greater interest to the general reader than his architecture. Nevertheless, this book should be read, above all, by architects and the growing body of those interested in architecture. Professor Lethaby never wrote a negligible book; and this posthumous collection of a serial originally printed in *The Builder* is no exception.

F. A. GUTHEIM

The Art of Renoir

By Albert C. Barnes and Violette de Mazia. With a foreword by John Dewey. One hundred and forty-eight illustrations. New York, 1935. G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers. Price, \$5.00.

FOR many years Dr. Albert C. Barnes has been acquiring outstanding paintings by Renoir to add to the extensive collections of the Barnes Foundation at Merion, Pennsylvania. Now, with the collaboration of Violette de Mazia, he has written a book about this favorite artist. The volume is bound to create the same discussion that the authors' previous book on Matisse aroused, for it is an even more thorough application of his aesthetic system.

The first part of the book is a statement of aesthetic theory, based on the philosophy of Dr. John Dewey (who contributed the foreword). Art is experience, the authors point out, and it should be judged from that standpoint. Just as an individual grows through the active coördination of past experiences, so does the artist. His experiences are largely the traditions handed on by past generations, and these, modified by his reactions to the world about him and by the counter-reaction of the environment, are molded into a new and original creation. The critic, then, perceiving in an artist's work his heritage from the past, and noting the intelligence with which he has used this heritage, is able to arrive at a judgment which, the authors claim, is of scientific verification. Two things are ever-present in the artist's mind—form and expression. The two are interdependent, for it is through form (or "plastic values") that the artist is able to express (squeeze out) his

personal reaction to the environment. By choosing forms which are universal he rises above the particular to the general, creating a style which, reminding the onlooker of a thousand past experiences, becomes alive and meaningful. We follow the artist's creative process backwards until we arrive at that emotion which was the primary impulse. All this happens in our subconscious mind, through a series of sympathetic reactions. This theory is, of course, nothing but a restatement of the hypothesis of empathy, so brilliantly established by Lipps and so clearly popularized by Vernon Lee. Although accepted as a behavioristic theory of art-perception, the hypothesis of empathy makes no attempt to be qualitative, beyond pointing out the obvious fact that "good" art is that which has a high empathetic effectiveness. Thus Dr. Barnes is thrown back to the Dewey theory of individual growth as a criterion of an artist's worth, and the study of the painter becomes a search for the specific influences he has undergone, with an evaluation of the use he has made of them.

It would seem normal to begin this investigation by collecting documented instances of direct influence upon Renoir—such as copies of other artists' work or biographical anecdotes showing a leaning towards a favorite old master (such as Cézanne's famous: "One should pronounce the name of Delacroix only upon one's knees!"). But Dr. Barnes and his co-worker choose to ignore the large mass of biographical material at their disposal. They hardly once refer to that delightful and highly informative essay which the dealer Vollard wrote on Renoir. Instead they subject hundreds of canvases to a searching examination and, on the basis of their own extensive knowledge of paintings, detect here and there certain signs of affinity with the works of other painters. For example: "'After the Concert' [a painting in the Barnes Foundation] offers an interweaving of three principle traditional themes, each endowed with more luminous and richer color and surface-quality. The delicate volumes and porcelain-like surfaces of Boucher and Fragonard appear in the painting of the two women at the left; the subtle space-volume relationships throughout

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MOVING AHEAD!

Please turn to page 382 —————>

the picture are reminiscent of Chardin at his best; Venetian solid color is recalled by the painting of the woman's head at the upper right and by the surface of the wall, and the latter includes modification by Daumier both of the Venetian color itself and of Venetian surface-quality." Footnotes to this passage refer to no fewer than nineteen paintings to

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support these contentions. It can readily be seen that it is no easy task to read the book, particularly since there are no direct references to the excellent plates, and the reader is forced to turn first to the catalogue, and then to the appropriate plate which the catalogue refers him to.

The authors' contention is that the development of Renoir was from almost eclectic youthful work, where Courbet and the Impressionists exert the greatest influences, through a gradual loosening of drawing and intensification of color and up to a culmination at the end of his life, when he carried the eighteenth-century style to its apogee and beat the Venetians in their own game of functional color. This progress was by no means continuous; twice the master faced setbacks. The first time he fled to that land which, ever since its conquest by France in 1830, has fascinated French painters—Algiers. The second time he strengthened his line and flattened his form—a style usually held to be influenced by Ingres, though Dr. Barnes disagrees.

Many will feel that the authors have over-labored their point. Certainly Renoir underwent many influences. One objects not to Dr. Barnes's particularization of these influences, but to his over-emphasis of them. No room has been left for discussion of the painter's sculpture and graphic work. Surely a well-rounded view of the art of Renoir, which is to be expected from the title, should include these branches of the artist's activity, for work in these media sheds additional light on his paintings. The fact that he turned to sculpture is direct evidence of his plastic interests. And it should not be overlooked that Renoir began as a china painter, and never forgot the slick craftsmanship of that profession. How significant it is to find Vollard reporting that he disliked the work of the neo-Impressionists, calling it cross-stitch painting! Nor should it be forgotten that, at the end of his life his world became very small, as small as Monet's, and that, with an ardor which would be called heroic if we did not know that it was involuntary, he painted those pneumatic nudes of his last year with brushes strapped to numbed and useless fingers.

But the feature of the book which is apt to create most discussion is the attitude taken towards the subject-matter of Renoir's art. Among the reasons which Dr. Barnes and Miss de Mazia give for Renoir's superiority over the Venetians is that he was freed from literary content. "He has the further very great advantage that his pictures, while they represent human action with the fullest essential realism, have no associated story such as that of Titian's "Entombment" or "Bacchus and Ariadne" to distract attention into the realms of fancy." We are asked to think of his paintings in terms of formal non-illustrative design: "Modulated and intermingled tones of rose and lavender are major factors in creating a texture, solidity, and weight which are felt as belonging inherently to the thigh as a thing in itself, apart from the perceiver's associative memory connecting it with the human body." The assumption is that Renoir was not interested in subjects. This is at variance with every biographical fact. Like all creative artists, he uses form to give the subject greater intensity, and it is a paradox that, if the art of such a painter is examined too closely, his mastery of form receives over-emphasis. Renoir's subject, in his developed period, was Woman. His interest in Woman was not a dispassionate one, as any reader may verify by consulting Vollard's biography. The majority of his work consists of nudes; his few landscapes seem empty without his model Gabrielle's buxom form to provide a central point, unifying the centrifugal composition. Even a bouquet of flowers, Vollard tells us, was a study for a nude. He is thus not an abstractionist, and he cannot be judged fairly unless all phases of his psychology are consulted. Unfortunately this cannot be deduced from his work alone.

Dr. Barnes's book is an over-emphasis of one side of Renoir's personality. The method of tracing an artist's growth by the use made of the work of past masters is a dangerous one. It creates the possibility of mistaking misuse for use, and is apt to be confused with eclecticism. Worse, it establishes an evolutionary doctrine contrary to all observations of art-history. Unlike scientific thought, art is not built up on the past to new heights.

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Art goes in cycles, following a periodicity as apparent as it is baffling. Renoir may or may not be greater than the rococo masters and the Venetians. If he is, it is not because he stood upon their shoulders. In his search after that so attractive will-o'-the-wisp, scientific criticism, Dr. Barnes and his associate have stumbled into many fallacies. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that due to their over-emphasis, certain truths become distorted to untruths. All of which is unfortunate, because the book represents a colossal amount of work. The results, for the labor expended, are disappointing.

BEAUMONT NEWHALL

TO MEMBERS

A REPORT OF PROGRESS

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR MAY 1, 1934, THROUGH APRIL 30, 1935

This report is an excerpt from the Annual Report presented at the 26th Annual Convention of The American Federation of Arts, May 20, 21, 22, in Washington. Although the fiscal year just closed is one of superlative achievement in every line of activity, this particular report covers only the work of the Membership and Circulation Department, the division which is concerned with PHYSICAL growth.

- 1. Individual Memberships.** A 33 per cent growth in individual memberships for the year. And a greater percentage of members are renewing than ever before!
- 2. Chapter Memberships.** More organizations were enrolled than in the best previous year in history—exceeding the former high mark by 38 per cent! Eighty-three *new* organizations became *integral units* of this national federation during the year.

As memberships increase, in direct proportion does the value of the Federation *as a property* increase. And as a Member, you own a share of the whole.

- 3. Membership Privileges.** The greater the number of individual members and Chapters, the greater the dividends of membership to you. Consequently, all privileges of membership were increased during the year, and many new privileges were added. You now enjoy greater tangible benefits from your membership than ever before.

4. The American Magazine of ART. *Circulation:* The Magazine passed during the year its former circulation peak by a good margin. It is today read and used by more people than any other publication in its field, according to available *sworn* circulation records.

In the past 16 months (the period of active promotion) circulation has increased more than 72 per cent! And at the present time, readers are increasing at an even faster rate!

Advertising: The dollar volume of advertising in the Magazine is increasing, too. April was the best month in the Magazine's history, with one exception. More contracts are already on hand for the Fall and Winter selling season than for many years.

5. American Art Annual, Volume 31. Sixty per cent more orders than for the same selling period for Volume 30. Advertising volume exceeded the budget estimate by more than 40 per cent.

6. Who's Who in American Art. Six months before publication, more than 600 orders. Only 400 more orders, with a reasonable amount of advertising, will produce the first edition at a profit. And advertising prospects are bright!

The greater the circulation, and greater the volume of advertising, even finer become the publications of the Federation.

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MODERN ART AND THE SPATIAL WORLD

(Continued from page 348)

should be considered somewhat in the light of a problem. That there is something more in art than the solving of problems is not to be denied. But too much has already been said about beauty and self-expression. These could well be left for a while to take care of themselves. If art is brought back to the life of the people, it must be done through a clearer exposition of the various divisions of its more technical side. If this could occur, much of the pessimism over the appreciation of modern art would disappear.

FORMS OF ART

(Continued from page 363)

shortly afterward Kirchner, Schmidt-Rottluff, and Heckel revived this slumbering tradition, and the sculptor G. H. Wolff, several years later, brought this revival to its richest culmination. His wood-cut inscription-illustrations to the poetry of Rimbaud, Homer, and Gottfried Benn are the most sensitive and subtle pieces of language interpretation that have been achieved by any contemporary artist.

In America, Benjamin Kopman, and more recently Wallace B. Putnam, in a privately published book "Manhattan Manners," have successfully experimented with the decorative and functional use of script in relation to illustration. The Social-Sceners are now completing the cycle and echoing the vital role that the printed word plays in contemporary life.

It's a great book—this little volume by Allen Tucker. *Design and the Idea* is its name. You can add it to your library for only \$1 (90 cents if you are a member). The American Federation of Arts, Barr Building, Washington, D. C.

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Words about art may help to explain techniques, remove prejudices, clarify relationships, suggest sequences and attack habitual resentments through the back door of the intelligence. But the front door to understanding is through experience of the work of art itself.

ALFRED H. BARR, JR.